

MOTIVATION FOR SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING: DISPLACED UKRAINIAN PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES OF LEARNING GERMAN IN SWISS SCHOOLS

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Abstract. Drawing on extensive research on second language (L2) learning and motivation and based on a longitudinal study of displaced Ukrainian children's perspective on Swiss primary schools and learning German as a second language, the author explores socio-contextual factors that play a significant role in shaping displaced children's motivation to learn German in the initial stages of their placement in Swiss schools. The exploratory study, which was carried out within the framework of a qualitative methodology, revealed multiple factors that influence displaced children's motivation for L2 learning in the context of German-Swiss diglossia in schools in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. Based on the 'person-in-context' relational view of motivation, the author focuses on how individual learners perceive their learning context, their L2 learning experiences, and how their perceptions and interactions with the L2 learning environment affect their L2 motivation and learning behavior in the initial stages of placement in the host country schools. The data obtained by semi-structured interviews with displaced children and their parents are contextualized by classroom observations of the participants in different learning settings, which allows the author to focus on the learner-in-classroom context and contextually situated motivation while longitudinally collected data enable the author to address motivational developments in individual learners over time. Multiple motivational influences inductively derived from the data are grouped into four main categories: L2 learning setting, L2 learning methods, relationships with peers, and parental involvement. Qualitative content analysis of the data reveals that the effects of the L2 learning setting and peer groups are the strongest compared to other learner-external factors and vary within the research period. The study also confirms the importance of successful adjustment of displaced learners to a diglossic school environment for the development of L2 motivation.

Keywords: second language learning, motivation, socio-contextual factors, second language learning environment, displaced Ukrainian children, primary school.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of Ukrainian displacement since 2022, the schooling experiences of refugee children in their host countries, where the languages of schooling are different from the refugees' home language(s) and where successful schooling depends on the effective acquisition of these languages, are of particular pedagogical interest. Researchers are increasingly focusing on the challenges Ukrainian refugee children face when adapting to new cultures, languages, and education systems in their host countries, including Germany, Austria, and Switzerland (Huber et al., 2023); exploring the positive effects of multilingual support in teaching L2 (German) to young Ukrainian refugees (Goltsev, 2023); and examining refugee

students' perceptions of their social inclusion and social acceptance by their classmates in various school contexts (Woltran et al., 2024). Our study focuses on L2 motivation in the context of diglossic schools in German-speaking Switzerland, where displaced children encounter two initially unfamiliar languages of schooling and communication – Standard German and Swiss German.

The data on which this article is based were collected for a larger study on Ukrainian refugees' perspectives on the Swiss school system and second language acquisition in Swiss schools (see Abramicheva 2023; 2025). The two-year research project¹ was guided by two main questions: 1) What factors influence the integration of displaced Ukrainian primary school children into the educational environment of their host country school? and 2) What factors influence the learning of German as a second language by displaced Ukrainian children in Swiss primary schools? This article specifically addresses the question "What factors impact the displaced children's motivation for learning German in the early stages of their inclusion in Swiss primary education?"

Although not a homogeneous group, the studied group of L2 (German) learners share some common characteristics, such as 1) a history of forced displacement resulting in a high degree of uncertainty about their life prospects and the duration of placement in the host-country school; 2) the learners' unexpected transfer to a new education system and school culture; 3) little or no pre-displacement experience of learning German as a foreign language; 4) placement in regular Swiss primary schools marked by the situation of '*German-Swiss diglossia*'²; 5) provisional support in learning the language of schooling (German) in integration classes, upon displacement, and subsequent support in DaZ (*Deutsch als Zweitsprache*)³ classes, upon the learners' transfer to regular Swiss classes.

The theme of motivation to learn L2, which repeatedly emerged in the collected data, is strongly related to the children's perceptions of L2 as well as their linguistic self-confidence and educational and social goals, which will be considered in this paper as individual motivational influences (and will be addressed in section 4.1).

At the same time, the data analysis shows that the development of L2 motivation in displaced children is strongly influenced by socio-contextual factors, to which the learners are exposed. A variety of contextual motivational influences inductively derived from the data were grouped into four main categories: L2 learning setting (DaZ vs a regular Swiss class), L2 learning methods (place-based learning, cooperative learning, multilingual learning practices), relationships with peers (group dynamics, belonging, friendships for learning), and parental involvement (addressed in section 4.2). These categories (with some further subcategories where applicable) will be described, illustrated, and discussed below.

Behavioral manifestations of the students' interest in L2 learning, both reported by the studied group and directly observed in classroom settings, varied significantly across 1) the studied group; 2) the two periods of data collection; 3) the types of L2 learning settings and social structures (peer groups) displaced children were placed in for learning. These observed variations align with certain distinct conceptions relating to motivation in general and L2 motivation, in particular. Firstly, motivation is a complex and "individual difference"⁴ characteristic; secondly, "in sustained long-term activities such as learning a foreign language, motivation does not remain constant over weeks, months and years, or even during a single lesson; it ebbs and flows in complex ways in response to various internal and external influences" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021, p.5). Thirdly, "motivational sources closely related to the learners' immediate classroom environment have a stronger impact on the overall L2 motivation

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²*Diglossia* is where two dialects or varieties of a language are used by a single language community.

³German as a second language

⁴*Individual difference (ID) research* examines how individuals show consistency of behavior across time and contexts while differing from other individuals in their trait dimensions and associated behavioral tendencies (Dörnyei, 2010).

complex than had been expected" (ibid., p.45). Moreover, the context of L2 learning is not a stable background feature that may influence individual motivation but a dynamic construct that needs to be approached from a relational perspective that "takes account of the organically evolving interactions among motivation, self and context" (ibid., p.57). According to Ushioda's '*person-in-context*' *relational view of motivation* (Ushioda, 2009), taken as the framework of our study, the explicit emphasis in L2 motivation research is put on "the complex individuality of real persons and their lived experiences, in contrast to the traditional focus on abstract language learner characteristics" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021, p. 57).

Given this, the focus of our research is on how individual displaced learners perceive the L2 contextual reality and L2 learning experiences and how their perceptions, beliefs, and interactions with the L2 learning environment affect their L2 motivation and learning behavior, in the initial stages of placement in Swiss schools. The theories and concepts we rely on and/or consider relevant to the present study with its focus on 'a learner in a specific learning context' and with a view of motivation as "emergent from relations between human intentionality and the social world" (Sealey & Carter, 2004, p.206) will be outlined in the chapter that follows.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Research on second language motivation. Motivation has been found to significantly affect language learning success: "it provides the primary impetus to initiate L2 learning and later the driving force to sustain the long learning process" (Dörnyei, 2010, p. 65).

Motivation is increasingly viewed as an emergent phenomenon, implying it can develop over time and change as a result of one's experiences with learning and other circumstances (Dörnyei, 2009; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021). The dynamic conception of motivation, as explicated by Dörnyei, suggests that "motives do not necessarily have a linear relationship with ongoing action. Their pull or push is interfered with by a multitude of other pulls and pushes, and the relative power of a particular pull/push will be amplified or mitigated by particular constellations of environmental and temporal factors" (Dörnyei, 2009, pp. 210-211).

Contemporary motivation research also suggests that every individual's learning is profoundly influenced by the particular context in which that person is situated (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021; Yim, Clément & MacIntyre, 2019; Ushioda, 2009). Researchers' perspectives of the role of contextual factors and the relationship between the individual and their context in shaping L2 motivation evolve and tend to embrace the '*person-in-context*' as the unit of analysis (Ushioda, 2009). According to Ushioda, a more relational, "more introspective type of research approach is needed to explore the dynamic nature of L2 motivation in context" (Ushioda, 1996, p. 240). Sealey and Carter argue that a *relational approach* to L2 motivation "focuses on the evolving network of relations among various features, phenomena and processes – relations which are complex, unpredictable, non-linear and always unique, since every person and context is unique" (Sealey & Carter, 2004, p. 196). Since contemporary approaches to L2 motivation emphasize its dynamic multi-level interactions with social-environmental factors, "more context-sensitive approaches to exploring these dynamic interactions and relational processes in the social ecology of the classroom and beyond" are necessary (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021, p. 184).

The role of the *socio-contextual factors* in shaping students' motivation has been increasingly highlighted by contemporary motivation researchers (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021; Juvonen & Wentzel, 1996; Salili, Chiu & Hong, 2001). Widely recognized social influences on motivation include peers and peer groups (Wigfield et al., 2019; Berndt & Keefe, 1995; Lewis & Sullivan, 2007), schools and school culture (Maehr & Midgley, 1991; Juvonen & Knifsend, 2016), and family (Simpkins & Fredricks, 2015; Pomerantz, Cheung & Qin, 2019).

Researchers' interest in the social context of L2 motivation is associated with the names of Gardner and Lambert (1972), who "viewed second languages as mediating factors between different

ethnolinguistic communities and thus regarded the motivation to learn the language of the other community as a primary force responsible for enhancing or hindering intercultural communication and affiliation” (as cited in Dörnyei, 2010, p. 67).

Central to Gardner’s approach, and fundamental for second language acquisition, is the concept of *integration*, which “refers to an individual’s disposition toward the L2 group and the extent to which they desire to interact with that group” (Gass et al., 2020, p. 522). According to Gardner (1985), the *integrative orientation* concerns a positive disposition toward the L2 group and the desire to interact with that group (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021, p. 41). The utilitarian counterpart of integrative orientation in Gardner’s theory is the *instrumental orientation* which pertains to the potential pragmatic gains of L2 proficiency (ibid.).

Clément’s *social context model* (1980) considers how the social setting influences the development of L2 among students from minority groups and studies motivational processes related to a person’s *linguistic self-confidence* in using the L2 (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021, p. 42). Clément’s model suggests that in multicultural settings with opportunities for social contacts with members of the majority language community, the frequency and quality of such social contact affect linguistic self-confidence, which, in its turn, mediates the motivation to learn and use the majority language (ibid.). Dörnyei emphasizes that linguistic self-confidence in Clément’s model is “primarily a socially defined construct (in contrast to the cognitive nature of *self-efficacy*⁵ in the motivational psychological literature), although self-confidence also has a cognitive component, the ‘perceived L2 proficiency’” (Dörnyei, 2010, pp. 73-74). It should be mentioned here that the conceptualization of motivation as a socially distributed process can be found in Bandura’s research (Bandura, 2001), where he extends the notion of self-efficacy to the collective efficacy of groups (e.g., families, communities, social institutions) working together toward a common goal (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021, p. 21).

Deci and Ryan’s *self-determination theory* (1985), which focuses on various types of *intrinsic* and *extrinsic motives*, has found a wide application in the field of L2 motivation research (Noels, 2001; Noels, Clément & Pelletier, 2001). The main objectives of the L2 motivation researchers were “to relate the various intrinsic/extrinsic components established in motivational psychology to *orientations* developed in L2 research, and to examine how the learners’ level of self-determination is affected by various classroom practices” (Dörnyei, 2010, p. 77). Noels (2001) found correlations between Gardner’s integrative orientation and the more self-determined forms of motivation (intrinsic motivation) and between Gardner’s instrumental orientation and external regulation (for a review, see Dörnyei, 2010). According to Noels (2003), L2 motivation integrates three constituents: *intrinsic*, *extrinsic*, and *integrative reasons* for learning behavior.

One more type of motivation, included in Deci & Ryan’s self-determination theory, is *amotivation*, which refers to “the relative absence of motivation that is not caused by a lack of initial interest but rather by the individual’s experiencing feelings of incompetence and helplessness when faced with the activity” (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Dörnyei & Ushioda speak of demotivating influences and define *demotivation* as “a negative process that reduces or diminishes a person’s motivation in relation to a behavioral intention or an ongoing action” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021, p. 140). The researchers argue that “persistent experiences of demotivation can lead to a state of amotivation, such as when a succession of negative performance outcomes reduces a learner’s sense of self-efficacy to such a low point that further engagement is perceived as futile” (ibid., p. 139). However, “not all experiences of demotivation will result in amotivation since the factors that cause demotivation may be short-lived or may change, and since some aspects of a person’s motivation may remain resilient to setbacks or negative influences” (ibid.). As Noels suggests, “amotivated individuals are not expected to exert much effort in performing

⁵*Self-efficacy theory* was developed by A. Bandura (1997) and refers to the perceived competence as a powerful motivational factor. According to Bandura, people with low sense of self-efficacy in a given domain perceive difficult tasks as personal threats, whereas a strong sense of self-efficacy enhances people’s achievement behavior (see Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021).

an activity and would likely quit it as soon as it is feasible to do so" (Noels, 2001, p. 111).

The educational shift in the L2 motivation research enables scholars to expand the theoretical framework of L2 motivation and focus on the *classroom reality of motivation* (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994) and integrate various aspects of the *learning situation* in their comprehensive L2 motivation constructs (Dörnyei, 1994). The role of multiple components of the learners' immediate classroom environment, such as classroom setting, syllabus/curriculum, teaching materials, teaching methods and practices, learning tasks, teacher's personality, etc. in shaping the L2 motivated learning has been proved to be significant. Dörnyei (1994) conceptualizes L2 motivation within a framework of three levels including the *language*, the *learner*, and the *learning situation level*. The latter is associated with situation-specific motives related to various aspects of language learning within a classroom setting and embraces the course-specific, teacher-specific, and group-specific motivational components (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021).

3. DATA AND METHODS

Data & participants. The research database integrates data collected across two research years. The first-year research data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with parents, narrative interviews with children, and classroom observations conducted in the fall-winter of 2022. The research was carried out across the Canton of Zug, where samples of 24 displaced Ukrainian parents and 26 children of primary school age⁶ were obtained for the initial study.

The second-year research data were collected through semi-structured interviews with children, a parent survey (conducted prior to interviews with children), and observations of the participants in the classroom setting with post-observation self-reports received from the participants. For the second-year study (in the fall-winter of 2023), a sample of 10 displaced children was voluntarily selected from among those who participated in the first year of the study.

Both samples varied in age, gender, type of school attended in Ukraine, type/length of German language instruction in the reception/integration class upon displacement to Switzerland, German language competence prior to displacement, English as an FL competence prior to displacement, post-displacement involvement in extracurricular activities, availability of additional German training (e.g., in individual tutorials with a bilingual teacher, parental assistance in L2), access to other than school socialization contexts.

The sample of parents varied in age, social and educational background, expectations about their children's education, extent of involvement in their children's education, foreign language(s) proficiency as of the date of displacement, experience of learning German upon displacement, and living arrangements in the host country.

At the time of the fall-winter 2023 study, all the children participants were placed in regular (mainstream) Swiss classes in cantonal schools across the Canton of Zug, where they were assigned one Ukrainian student per class to ensure the students' full immersion in the target language environment and to exclude/minimize possible engagements with the student's home language(s) in the classroom.

Methods. Our exploratory research was carried out within the framework of a qualitative methodology (Cohen et al., 2007; Gass et al., 2020; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021), which enables L2 motivation researchers to "capture the complex situated dynamics of L2 motivation and uncover the complex interaction of social, cultural and psychological factors within individual learners, in the situated context of their lived experiences and local realities" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021, p. 213).

Multiple research instruments used in the course of our longitudinal study added to the holistic approach to the research question. The interviews with children enabled us to capture extensive data on the individual L2 learners' perceptions of their efficacy and achievements in L2, on the external social

⁶ In the Canton of Zug, primary school (*Primarschule*) lasts 6 years and comprises grades 1 to 6 (ca. age 6-11/12).

environment of L2 learning, and on their L2 learning goals and task behavior.

Explicit indications of children's motives to learn L2 were obtained through interview questions, such as: *"Is Swiss school difficult for you?", "Do you like learning German and why?", "Is learning German difficult for you? and What is particularly difficult?", "What was your favorite subject in Ukrainian school? and What is your favorite subject now [in a Swiss school]?", "If your favorite subjects then and now are different, why?", "In which lessons do you feel most/least confident? Why?", "Which L2 learning activity do you like most? and Why?", "Where else, besides school, do you speak German?", "What can you do in German?", "Do you want to learn German?", "Do you need German and why?", "Do you socialize with your Swiss classmates outside of school?", "What do you find the most interesting and useful in the Swiss school?", "Are you motivated to learn German?", "Do you think you are coping well?", "What do you think about your progress in German?", "What determines your success in learning German?", "Can you describe an ideal situation where you could learn German better?", "Would you like to continue studying at a Swiss school?"*

Interviews with parents provided first-hand evidence on their children's learning behavior and attitudes toward multiple learning activities, which they could directly and continuously observe in a home and out-of-school environment, both prior to and upon displacement to the host country school.

The questions set to the parent participants were mostly open-ended and included, among others, the following: *"Have you noticed any progress in your child's learning of German?" and "How can you evaluate this progress?", "What language(s) does your child speak outside of school?", "Does your child have any friends among their Swiss peers with whom he or she communicates after school?", "Do you think your child is motivated to speak German outside of school and why?", "Is there any practical need for your child to use German outside of school?", "Are there things that prevent your child from interacting in German outside of school?", "Does your child help you with anything in German?", "What do your child's teachers tell you about your child?", "Do you think your child is doing better, worse, or the same in his or her studies [upon displacement]?", "How would you describe your child's level of independence when doing homework?"*

Not all students, let alone children of primary school age, can accurately recognize or report the causes of their learning behavior. Therefore, direct observation of children in the classroom was an important sub-study and yielded interesting results, revealing consistency/inconsistency in students' self-reported behavior and behavior observed in the classroom, and allowing the researcher to document the situational dynamics of L2 motivation in various learning settings/in performing various learning tasks. Classroom observations of displaced children were carried out over three days each, at intervals of one to three weeks, which enabled us to observe the children in different lessons, participating in different L2 activities, performing different tasks in L2 both individually and in cooperation with their peers. The data obtained from classroom observations of participants allowed us to compare the diagnosed (interview-based) motivational influences (at least those directly related to the classroom/school setting) with the behavioral manifestations of learner motivation in the classroom and discern their actual target language output (production of the target language) in the learning tasks observed. In some cases, post-observation self-reports received from the children were conducive to understanding the children's L2 learning behavior in the classroom.

And finally, follow-up conversations with classroom teachers added much to the informativity and credibility of the data obtained from classroom observations of participants by confirming single/repeated observations of specific learning behavior patterns in the target group of students.

The interviews were conducted in the participants' home language (Ukrainian), transcribed verbatim including nonlinguistic details of relevance to the utterances and then translated by the author into English. Children were interviewed in the presence of one or both parents and with their full consent. All participants were anonymized in the further data analysis and published materials. All participant observations were conducted with the consent of all relevant parties – the participants themselves and their parents and the school principals and classroom teachers.

In this study, we rely on the explicit indications of motives verbalized by children in their interviews and on behavioral manifestations of motivation (both reported by the participants and observed by the

researcher in the classrooms) and focus on the dynamic change of individual students' L2 behavior influenced by multiple psychological, environmental and social factors. All categories/subcategories referred to in this article were formed inductively in the analytical process.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Learner-related motivation

L2 motivation in specific learner groups. At the initial stage of placement in a Swiss school and exposure to second language learning, the most important factors impacting displaced children's motivation to learn German were 1) the age of the child; 2) their previous experience of learning German as an FL / or a *threshold of L2 proficiency* (Gass et al., 2020, p.490); and 3) uncertainty about life prospects (for the displaced family and, consequently, for the child). These factors to a great extent correlate with the most noticeable initial perspectives and attitudes toward L2 learning that we could observe in various groups of displaced students. Since the motivation-related factors that will be discussed in this paper have different (and sometimes opposite) effects on the development of L2 motivation in various groups of children, we will designate these groups *ad interim* as A, B and C.

In younger children (6-8) (group A), it was not so much the conscious motives for learning L2 or learning in general, but rather the excitement of belonging to a group of peers sharing some kind of goal-directed activity, that was their primary motivation for going to school. Schooling (first in a reception class, then in a regular class) was that very kind of goal-directed activity that became accessible and compulsory for all displaced children upon arrival in the host country. Placement in a reception/integration class (in most cases a monolingual Ukrainian class) was approached by younger children as a new and exciting endeavor that was quite challenging in terms of the language of instruction but encouraging in terms of making new friends and being part of a group. In this period, it was difficult for many younger children to verbalize their motives for learning L2; most of them had no or very short primary school experience in their home country and had to (re-)start their primary schooling in the host country; most of them were driven mainly by the natural desire to stay in a group and interact with their peers, i.e., by social stimuli. Upon their transfer to regular Swiss classes most children reported communication with their Swiss classmates as the main reason for learning L2, which, again, suggests the priority of social (integrative) motives for L2 learning. Interestingly, the children in this group did not report Swiss German or exclusion from communication with Swiss peers as the main difficulties associated with learning German in a Swiss school. They perceived the two variants of the language spoken in Swiss schools as a single language, as the language that everyone speaks and that they need to learn, and were therefore less sensitive to and less demotivated by school diglossia than older children.

(1) *P: My daughter really likes school, and she likes learning the language. She doesn't quite understand everything yet. There is a language barrier, of course, but my daughter isn't particularly worried about it. She communicates a lot with her school friends; she always goes to school with her Swiss friend; they talk about some things on the way to school.*

I: [addressing my question to the child] Can you speak German?

S: A little. Now it's better than before. I know more words. I know a poem about Santa Claus.

I: [I ask if she can recite the poem; the child recites an eight-line poem in German] Do you understand what the poem is about?

S: Almost.

I: Can you tell me what it's about?

S: [the child translates six of the eight lines in her home language] I don't quite understand the last two. (P:S3:Age8:G2_2022)⁷

⁷ To ensure the confidentiality of personal information, all participants were anonymized for the data analysis and publications.

Among older children (9-12), those who had stronger motivation for learning L2 were driven by intrinsic and/or social motives (group B). Intrinsically and/or socially motivated students included those who reported a strong interest in learning the language(s) linked to their positive self-concept of language learning abilities (*"I like learning German because I like learning languages"*; *"I like German as I'm quite good at it"*; *"I like learning German as I'm good at languages and it's interesting"*) or had prior experience of learning German as a FL in a Ukrainian school and a threshold of L2 knowledge (both of grammar and vocabulary) sufficient to make their transfer to a fully immersive L2 learning setting feasible and less stressful. The students of this group perceived the immersive learning of German as a new and more challenging stage of learning the target language, as an endeavor they would like to experience. Their motivation can be compared to that of an L2 learner anticipating a study abroad program that promises both the challenge and excitement of learning the target language and exploring the target language environment.

(2) *"I like learning German, yes, and I understand a lot, since I already studied German in a Ukrainian school. I like learning German here. I liked it in Ukraine too. It was just that the topics were easier there. Now it's more difficult, but it's okay ... It's more interesting to learn it here. Here, I learn to speak German, and I speak a lot."* (S6:Age11:G5_2022)

This group of children reported Swiss German as the main difficulty relating to L2 learning in a Swiss school.

(3) I: *What is the most difficult thing about learning German?*

S: *Swiss German. Swiss German is worse than slang!*

I: *Why?*

S: *Because I don't understand it. I don't like it. [...] I understand Hochdeutsch better. I started learning it well in the integration class.* (S2:Age12:G5_2022)

Socially motivated children in group B reported their strong desire to communicate with their classmates and expressed regret at their inability to understand / speak / interact in German.

(4) *"I would like so much to tell them about myself, about my school, but I can't. How can I tell them!? I don't know the language! If I knew the language, I would tell them! I would tell them everything! I would talk non-stop!"* (S8:Age10:G4_2022)

However, many of the displaced primary school children (group C) felt forced to learn the new language of school and would have chosen not to if they had the opportunity. Many children had a very hard time being separated from their families (fathers, grandparents), classmates and friends; they perceived their flight to the host country as a forced and temporary measure and experienced severe emotional stress, which prevented them from perceiving the new educational reality as access to new learning opportunities. The integration class teachers, who were the first to work with displaced children upon their arrival in the host country, also reported that the initial stage of inclusion in the host country school was characterized by a lack of or low motivation to learn German in many displaced children. It was difficult to explain to children why they had to go to a new school, why they could not learn in their home language, and when they would be able to return home, to see their friends, their class and teachers. Since many displaced children perceived their new encounter with the host country school as forced and temporary, they did not put much effort into L2 learning and approached their L2 learning experience from the perspective of a quick return home.

Since displaced children were not formally assessed by the host country school during the first two years of their placement (the standard grading system was not applicable to the target group of displaced students), the 'good grades' incentive, which might have worked for many children if they had learned German as an FL in their home country school as a subject prescribed by the home school's curriculum, was not an afforded or viable reward for learning L2 in regular Swiss schools. Uncertainty

about life prospects, implying that extrinsic goals are neither defined nor *internalized*⁸, a lack of intrinsic and/or social (integrative) motivation to learn L2, and low self-concept of language learning abilities resulted in amotivation for L2 learning in many primary school students, at the initial stage of their placement in Swiss schools.

Major influences on the learners' L2 perceptions and motivation across the first two years. The first-year interviews revealed that children's positive perceptions of L2 and interest in L2 learning were related to the role of the teacher and L2 support in DaZ classes (with monolingual instruction in German and no interference of Swiss German), while negative perceptions of L2 learning were associated with a lack of comprehension of the L2 instruction, German-Swiss diglossia in regular Swiss classrooms, and exclusion from meaningful interactions with Swiss peers.

(5) *"I don't know what to do. I don't understand... During breaks children speak Swiss, and during classes they speak German. And I can't speak their language."* (S8:Age10:G4_2022)

(6) S: ... I don't communicate with my classmates.

I: Why? Don't they invite you to join in the games they play?

S: If they do, I don't agree, I like being alone [the child suddenly becomes sad and looks down, which suggests the opposite].

I: Did they ask you about your Ukrainian class?

S: No. Even if they asked, how would I understand?! I don't understand the language! I don't like the language! (S14:Age9:G3_2022)

The data from the second-year interviews were markedly different. The answers to the questions about whether the children liked learning German, whether they wanted to continue learning it and why, showed that 1) most children were aware of *why* they needed German and reported communication and educational goals as their primary motives; 2) despite the reported difficulties that still remained in learning the target language (although these varied from child to child), most children admitted that they would like to continue learning German; 3) children's increased interest in learning German directly correlated with an increased level of comprehension of the language and positive experiences of interactive engagements in/with L2 both in and outside the classroom; and 4) increased motivation for L2 learning related to greater acceptance by a peer group.

(7) *"I need German to speak well, to understand German texts and books."* (S8:Age11:G5_2023)

(8) *"I feel good in class. Everything was good before, too, it's just that last year I was more by myself. [...] I was swinging on the swings all the time. And this year ... this year I communicate with them more and run and play with them. Last year they also invited me to play. But then, I understood less."* (S4:Age10:G3_2023)

Regardless of age and grade, most children reported that after a year of studying in regular Swiss classes they began interacting more with their classmates and identified themselves as part of their Swiss class. Now that children realized they could use L2 for practical purposes, understand the diglossic local community better, and express themselves in a way that their local peers and adults could understand, they more frequently reported that they liked learning German and wanted to know it well/better, so that language would no longer be an obstacle to communication, receiving/exchanging information, and continuing their education in the host country.

(9) *"I want to speak fluently. And I want to understand what my classmates say."* (S6:Age12:G6_2023)

In most cases, the responses indicated increased motivation for L2 learning in children. Increased intrinsic motivation was associated with higher levels of comprehension of L2 and growing linguistic self-confidence.

(10) *"I like learning German. It's cool. Even easy. Yes, it's become easy."* (S4:Age10:G3_2023)

Increased integrative motivation was related to an increased desire to communicate and enjoy a sense of belonging to the L2 group, as well as increased linguistic self-confidence.

⁸ Different types of extrinsic motivation depending on how internalized (self-determined) the extrinsic goals are within the person's self-concept are addressed by *self-determination theory* (see Ryan & Deci, 2020).

(11) *"To be honest, at first, I didn't really like it [German], but now I like it more ... because now when I can say something, my classmates treat me better, and because I need to play football with them ..."* (S9:Age9:G3_2023)

Increased extrinsic motivation was related to an increased awareness of the role of German as a tool for meaningful learning and social viability and as the only possible means of gaining access to better educational opportunities in the host country – an insight that had already been internalized by the group of upper primary children. Recognition of the key role of L2 for further education became the strongest incentive for older children to continue learning German and to be eligible for a better secondary school path. All upper primary school students reported that they were fully aware of how much their future education depended on their good knowledge of German, should they stay in the host country and pursue higher educational aims there.

(12) *"I need German to live here normally. To communicate normally. It is easier to get a job here if you know the language well."* (S6:Age12:G6_2023)

(13) *S: I want to learn German because here, if you want to achieve something in life, you need to know German... I would like to learn German well for good grades, for everything good. ... To achieve what I want. And good German is a must. ... I think I'll go to a Sekundarschule⁹, that is... I don't think so, but I'm sure that I'll go to the Sekundar. There are two levels there. If you have done well, you can go to the Sekundarschule and they will put you in class A, and if you have done a little worse, but still good enough for the Sekundarschule, there will be class B.*

I: Which class are you aiming for?

S: I think for class A... My grades are very good. (S2:Age13:G6_2023)

(14) *"When I finish the 6th grade, I will go to Oberstufe ... it's like you go either to Real, if you haven't done very well, or to Sekundar[schule], where almost all children go, or to Gymnasium, but it's very hard to get in – it's for the mega smart. To get into Gymnasium, you need to have 5.5 in all subjects. It's very hard to get there. You need motivation."* (S6:Age12:G6_2023)

Some children reported that once they established the goal of improving their L2 proficiency in order to achieve higher final grades in L2 by the end of primary school, they began to put more effort into learning the language. The data analysis also revealed that achieving some measurable progress in L2 (e.g., getting higher grades in German or language-related subjects, such as NMG¹⁰) contributed to students' self-efficacy. The latter was confirmed by the frequency of "I can do"/"I will do" statements in children's reports: "I can learn it"; "I think I can get a 5.5 in German by the end of this year"; "I think I'll go to a Sekundarschule, that is ... I don't think so, but I'm sure that I'll go to the Sekundar"; "I am doing well in German [...] I have made a lot of progress in German"; "There is nothing I cannot do if I want to learn it", "I can already understand everything my teacher says"; "I think I will get in class A, my grades are very good", etc.

The data analysis also showed that the motives for learning L2 and L3 (Swiss German) were not the same. Children reported that learning German was vital for them to gain access to meaningful learning and further education in the host country, while the motives for learning Swiss German were primarily social. Although learning Swiss German is not mandatory and is not predetermined by the Swiss school curriculum, it is highly beneficial in terms of learners' social interactions with local peers and successful integration in the local community. Since Swiss German is not taught/learned at school and can be acquired mainly through informal interactions with Swiss-speaking peers, a child's motivation for learning Swiss German largely depends on their intent to interact with Swiss peers and their willingness to establish and maintain friendships with them. This motivation is highly pragmatic and is directly

⁹ *Sekundarschule* is one of the lower-secondary types of schools in the Canton of Zug, with the other types being the most demanding *Gymnasium* and least demanding *Realschule* and *Werkschule* (Oertig, 2012).

¹⁰ NMG stands for *Natur-Mensch-Gesellschaft* (Germ.) (nature, people, society) and is an important part of the primary school curriculum. The aim is to give students a comprehensive understanding of the world around them.

related to a child's need to belong to the L3 speaking group and, therefore, determines how much effort a child puts into L3 learning. The motivation for L3 learning is stronger in younger children (Group A), who are driven socially (not scholarly) and acquire Swiss German naturally.

Linguistic self-confidence. Linguistic self-confidence is thought to be one of the most important motivational factors for L2/FL learning (Clément, 1980; Clément, Dörnyei, Noels, 1994). Our data revealed several sources of linguistic self-confidence in displaced primary school students in the initial stages of their placement in Swiss schools: 1) social persuasion (receiving encouragement from a teacher/other knowledgeable adults, such as a host family, a sports coach, etc., / local peers); 2) past experience of learning/interacting in L2; 3) early and frequent exposure to interactions with Swiss peers in and outside the classroom; 4) self-acknowledged positive outcomes of L2 learning (see Abramicheva, 2025, pp. 40-42, 47-49) (acquisition of basic interpersonal communication skills in L2, differentiation between the two school languages and positive experience of developing sociolinguistic competence, an increased efficacy in achieving multiple practical goals in L2, successful interactional experiences, new friendships with the local peers). Source 4 emerged from the second-year study and is based on the learners' reports on their increased competence to perform multiple practical and social tasks in L2 and produce results and is directly related to the frequency of the learners' interactive engagements in/with the L2 environment.

An important finding is that while in the first-year interviews displaced children more often reported praise/positive feedback from the L2 teacher as a sign of recognition of their progress in L2 and as an impetus to learn the target language (perceived, upon placement in the reception/integration class, as a new school subject rather than an instrument for learning and social interaction), in the second-year interviews, children placed emphasis on the *perceived efficiency in L2* and interactional achievements, where much of the impetus for L2 learning came from the self-acknowledged positive outcomes of this learning.

The positive outcomes of L2 learning both in and outside the classroom had a particularly strong effect on the group of initially less motivated learners (Group C) by stimulating them to put more effort into L2 activities and strengthening their linguistic self-confidence. These children reported marked changes in their attitude toward L2 learning related to their positive achievements in L2. When asked *what they can do in German*, these children talked more about their progress in interactions with their classmates, overcoming the language barrier to classroom/peer communication, acknowledging their effective social interactions outside of school. Children's positive perception of L2 developed simultaneously with their linguistic self-confidence, which manifested through increased L2 efficiency in multiple classroom and real-life situations (*approaching teachers and peers for instructions; interacting actively with classmates during breaks; talking to the doctors; understanding someone who speaks Swiss; being able to respond in German/Swiss, etc.*).

The obtained data on displaced students' motivation for L2 learning conform to the widely acknowledged conception of the role of achievement-related beliefs and expectancies (see, e.g., Bandura, 1997; Eccles et al, 1998): students who believe that they are capable and that they can and will do well on a task (whether it is a regular L2 task set by a teacher in the classroom or a goal that the child has set for themselves and is working toward) are much more likely to be motivated than students who do not believe in their abilities.

(15) "Now I'm coping with German easily. If I learn new rules, I remember them. Before, I had to practice more. Now it's great! ... There's nothing I can't do if I want to learn it. I try to learn, and I'm good at languages." (S2:Age13:G6_2023)

(16) "We talk about different things. We discuss jokes and news. We discuss everything, because there is nothing that I cannot understand." (S5:Age11:G5_2023).

4.2. External influences on motivation

4.2.1 Effects of the L2 learning environment on motivation

Diglossic school. The diglossic context of the Swiss primary school significantly influences displaced learners' motivation for L2 learning upon their transition from reception / integration classes to regular Swiss classes. When placed in provisional integration classes to learn Standard German, displaced children were not exposed to a diglossic school/peer community and were not prepared for encountering two languages of instruction and peer interaction (Standard German & Swiss German) upon their transfer to regular Swiss classes.

(17) *"It's difficult for my daughter to go to the Swiss class, she is always under stress. She has always been sociable, active ... and she's always had a lot of friends in her [integration] class. But here, in the Swiss class, she has big communication problems. She just doesn't communicate with anyone, because she doesn't understand them. She doesn't want to go to school ... she cried a lot because of it. If she could, she wouldn't go there at all. She feels excluded, lonely, ... and that's why she doesn't want to go. But in the integration class, where she understands everything, she likes it."* (P:S15:Age10:G4_2022)

(18) *"It's really hard for me because I don't understand anything... everything is in German. ... I'm bored here. I just sit and don't understand anything. And I don't participate in anything..."* (S16:Age10:G3_2022)

For children in Group C, the experience of learning German in a diglossic classroom became one of the strongest demotivating factors, resulting in the children's negative self-concept of language learning abilities, conscious avoidance of interactions with Swiss classmates, and a negative perception of the target language. For children in Group B, on the contrary, transfer to a regular Swiss class was more often a strong motivating factor and was perceived by them as recognition of their L2 learning ability/proficiency as sufficient for their transfer to a regular class. Those children in Group B who had a pre-displacement threshold of L2 proficiency, commonly spent less time in integration classes (up to 3-4 weeks). For the same reason, it was easier for these children to differentiate between L2 and L3 in a diglossic classroom, as well as to adapt the FL learning strategies developed by the home country school to those used in the host country school. Although these children reported L3 as the main difficulty in the initial stages of learning L2 in a regular Swiss classroom, they admitted that they had to consciously choose between two learning strategies – learning and interacting exclusively in L2 or integrating learning and interactions in both languages.

DaZ class support & the role of the teacher. A significant motivating role in a diglossic school context is played by explicit L2 instruction in the L2 support structure of the DaZ class, where displaced students perceive themselves as active learners, learn the language consciously, receive the teachers' immediate and remedial linguistic feedback (e.g., in pronunciation, grammar, etc.), can feel aware of the progress they make, and are taught new language learning strategies that can be instrumental in their continuous L2 learning beyond the DaZ class setting (Abramicheva, 2025).

(19) *"Yes, I like learning German. I began to understand and began to like it. Well, now it's quite good, when ... when I understand how it works, it's interesting to me."* (S8:Age11:G5_2023)

(20) *"It was better last year, when I studied in a Ukrainian class [DaZ class for the Ukrainian students], where there were five children and the teacher explained things well, sometimes she said something through a translator and showed us how it would be in Ukrainian. ... Now it's a Swiss class, where no one is allowed to use a translator."* (S7:Age12:G6_2023)

Twelve-year-old D. reported that after the termination of the instruction in a DaZ class his interest in learning L2 dropped significantly:

(21) I: Do you like learning German?

S: I did. I liked learning German with the teachers I had before [the student means his teachers in a DaZ class]. I did like it a lot, but now I don't. When I was in the class of Herr F., he explained the best, and I learned the language the fastest there. (S7:Age12:G6_2023)

Some children (particularly upper primary schoolers) reported that, left without support in the DaZ class, they lost interest not only in learning German, but also in other subjects. These children continued to have difficulties with academic German (even though they reported evident progress in interactional German skills) and were unable to independently complete assignments in German and other subjects due to poor comprehension of written instructions and intense language input of the upper primary school¹¹ curriculum in general. The resumption of lessons in the DaZ class helped to revive their interest in learning the language.

Many children report that once they understand *what* they are learning (including both linguistic and non-linguistic content), they become interested in learning the subject. Conversely, if they experience comprehension difficulties, their willingness to learn L2 diminishes or disappears. In the context of immersive learning in a diglossic school, many children attribute their success/progress in L2 comprehension to the DaZ teacher intervention and often report that their interest/progress in L2 learning depends largely on their teacher, both their personal qualities and their ability to make the content of the lesson accessible to the student.

(22) *"I definitely need kindness from teachers. ... And I do well when they can explain things well."*
(S6:Age11:G5_2022)

(23) I: What helps you learn German?

S: If teachers explain things. So that the theory is explained well.

I: And what do you call theory?

S: Well, theory is when they explain how it works. (S2:Age13:G6_2023)

Behavioral manifestations of L2 motivation across individual learners and learning settings.

Behavioral manifestations of displaced students' interest in L2 learning, both reported by the studied group and discerned during classroom observations of the participants, varied significantly across 1) individual displaced learners and 2) different learning settings. Among the self-reported behavioral manifestations indicating the individual learners' effort put into the L2 learning activity/task/interaction, etc. are language choice, task engagement, and extracurricular use of L2. Students with higher levels of L2 motivation report choosing German for classroom peer interaction even if there are students sharing their first language or speaking English¹², in the classroom.

(24) *"I speak Hochdeutsch with my classmates. I have a friend who has been here for six years. We both speak English. But we choose German, because we both understand that it would be strange to speak English if we are in Switzerland. And we both know German and speak German."* (S2:Age13:G6_2023)

Also, these students more often show interest in teacher feedback/assessment, which indicates their active engagement in learning and the need to control its outcomes.

Other important manifestations of motivated behavior reported by displaced children include higher task engagement and the choice of more challenging tasks, quite often associated with writing (e.g., writing an essay or making up a story, etc.) and/or speaking (e.g., group discussion).

(25) S: I like writing. We often write stories, well, essays. Yesterday we were given a picture of how people used to live, in the past, how people carried things on carts pulled by cows or horses. And there were many different pictures, for example, a black and white picture of an old town with carriages and horses. We had to choose a picture and make up a story for it. It's difficult. I chose a picture of a cow with a cart 'Wagen'¹³ attached to it. My story was about people from one village having to give grain 'Weizen' to people from another village.

I: Did you make up a long story?

S: Yes, one page long. (S6:Age12:G6_2023)

¹¹Grades 4-6 of primary school.

¹²Upon displacement to Switzerland, English was a *lingua franca* for many displaced children who studied English as a foreign language in Ukrainian schools.

¹³The student in (25) repeated the nouns she used – first in her first language, then in German.

During classroom observations, behavioral manifestations of participants' L2 motivation included the frequency and quality of interactional engagements in L2 in the classroom, including those initiated by displaced learners, as well as volunteering answers in the classroom.

In a regular Swiss class setting, the frequency and quality of displaced students' interactional engagements in L2 varied significantly and were related to individual students' linguistic self-confidence and integrative motivation, as well as group dynamics (see section 4.2.3). Students with increased linguistic self-confidence, stronger integrative motivation, and a sense of belonging demonstrated a higher frequency of L2 interactions in the classroom, initiated both by themselves and their peers, in both learning and social activities. Moreover, these interactions were marked by a very distinct emotional component: children's interactional behavior was natural and characterized by a wide range of emotions expressed both verbally, in L2, (e.g., expressions of surprise, elation, disapproval, disagreement, irony, etc. were observed during individual, pair, and group work, in social interactions and games) and nonverbally. Conversely, displaced students lacking in linguistic self-confidence, with lower integrative motivation, and/or experiencing no sense of belonging to the group exhibited a lower frequency of L2 interactions in the classroom during both periods of data collection.

Furthermore, the frequency and quality of displaced students' interactions in L2, observed over time, correlate with the increased language output of the learners. Classroom observations of the participants in the regular Swiss class setting, conducted in the second year of study, revealed that those children who, in their interviews, reported greater interest in L2 learning related to their educational and/or social goals (e.g., participants in (9), (13)), were also more engaged in lessons which require academic language proficiency and productive use of L2 (such as German, NMG, etc.). Although displaced learners' proficiency in L2 was not comparable to that of their Swiss classmates (at both periods of data collection), most of them demonstrated increased language output¹⁴ over time in all lessons and activities that incorporate language production and were able to participate (actively) in multiple learning/social group activities in L2 when required.

Volunteering answers in the classroom is another important manifestation of motivated behavior observed in displaced children. The study shows that the frequency of volunteering answers is strongly related to the learning setting. In the DaZ class setting, most displaced children demonstrate higher engagement in the process of learning (the smaller class consisting of three to eight non-native learners of German ensures more active involvement of each child in the L2 learning tasks) and perceive themselves as active learners (Abramicheva, 2025, p. 38). They more often volunteer answers in the DaZ class as they feel no shame about making mistakes and know that their mistakes will be commented on by the teacher or discussed in the group. Conversely, in the regular class setting, with ca. twenty students in a regular class of students who speak German, Swiss German, or both, and where the learning is content-focused rather than aimed at L2 development, displaced students' task behavior is strongly related to the complexity of L2 learning tasks and teaching materials (intended for native speakers of German and perceived as challenging by most displaced learners), teaching practices and teacher feedback (consistent with the corresponding syllabi for Grades 1-6, not with the DaZ class supportive input), and very different group dynamics.

4.2.2 L2 learning methods

Place-based learning. In this subsection, we focus on the teaching/learning approaches that, according to the displaced students' reports, most significantly influenced their interest in L2 learning: 1) place-based learning¹⁵, 2) cooperative learning practices, and 3) classroom code-switching.

¹⁴ Here we mean *comprehensible output* that suggests accurate production in L2 and refers to the message "that is conveyed precisely, coherently, and appropriately" (Gass et al., 2020, pp.407-408).

¹⁵ In this paper, *place-based learning* refers to teaching practices in which teachers use the local environment as a context for learning, thereby transforming it into a classroom.

In conditions of full immersion in the target language environment, multiple opportunities of exposure to authentic realia and interactional engagements in/with L2 contexts as part of instructed learning were reported by the participants as the most interesting and effective, especially compared to those FL learning practices the children experienced in their home country schools prior to displacement. The children's first exposure to place-based learning took place in the integration classes, where they were introduced to the realia and artifacts – both related to school and the host country culture – for the first time. Place-based learning is a type of experiential learning widely utilized in Swiss primary schools and largely integrated in content learning across the curriculum. For displaced learners, experiential language learning was particularly motivating and exciting as it provided them with opportunities to learn and use the language simultaneously, to learn the language in multiple contexts, to learn through real-life social interactions, i.e. to learn through experience, which ensured the development of the learners' grammar and lexicon, as well as sociolinguistic competence (including sensitivity to language varieties, awareness of cultural references, idiomatic expressions, conventional speech formulae, etc.) and linguistic self-confidence (related to the children's increased functionality in L2). The research data show that place-based learning had a positive impact on motivation to learn L2 in all children, regardless of their age, pre-displacement L2 proficiency, or initial level of L2 motivation.

For example, eleven-year-old A. told how the teacher of his integration class would take children to the grocery store, where they learned the names of different foodstuffs and practiced paying at the self-checkout, following the instructions on the touchscreen display. According to A., he remembered a lot of linguistic information (new vocabulary) from that lesson and acquired a new practical skill. All the children who talked about similar practices of experiential learning recognized the huge advantages of this approach to language learning. They reported that it helped them to understand the meaning of words denoting both objects and processes, remember the new content/information faster, consolidate their knowledge, and enjoy the L2 learning process. Opportunities to immediately apply linguistic knowledge to real-life situations by 'doing things' and 'achieving practical outcomes' resulted in increased action competence and linguistic self-confidence for the children.

Twelve-year-old L., a student of a regular Swiss class, reported that during the Museum Week, which concludes their study of the history of medieval Switzerland, she had really enjoyed visiting different museums and exploring the physical objects whose names she had been trying to memorize for several weeks, and was thrilled to be able not only to comprehend the content of the guided tours on Swiss history, but also to be engaged in the content-related interactive activities with other students.

Twelve-year-old M. spoke enthusiastically about the Zukunftstag¹⁶ project as an opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge of the profession he was interested in. While describing in detail the consecutive stages of his work on the project, the student never focused on the language difficulties, but exclusively on the benefits gained from the experiential part of the learning, including those related to the enriched vocabulary input and enhanced opportunities for interactions in L2. "If students are placed in an environment in which they can actively connect the instruction to their interests [...] the achievement will be accelerated" (Schroeder et al., 2007, as cited by Hattie, 2023, p. 287). Strong intrinsic motivation for a specific goal-directed activity (e.g., in the case of the Zukunftstag project, students themselves choose the context or the 'place of learning' in accordance with their life interests, hobbies, or the future profession they would like to obtain) enhances the positive impact of experiential learning on L2 motivation. To assess *where* M. is in his L2 learning and how strong his motivation is, it is important to understand what exactly the project-based learning task consisted of and what exactly the student had to do to successfully complete it¹⁷. The complex Zukunftstag project involved several stages:

¹⁶ "The day of getting to know your future profession" (German).

¹⁷ The student's feedback on the project referred to here was recorded during the interview with the participant; the student's classroom reporting on his project work was observed by the author during participant observation in the classroom; the didactic materials for completing the task were kindly provided to the author for research purposes by the student's teacher.

organizational (planning the implementation stages, strategies, and the expected output), empirical (collecting materials, place-based acquaintance with the profession, interactive engagements (e.g., interviews) with the people in this profession, etc.), analytical (processing of the collected data, searching for additional information) and reporting (presenting the project outcomes in class with the following classroom discussion and feedback from the teacher and peers). The project, which was not intended for L2 learning and was set as a task in an NMG lesson in a regular class, when successfully completed by M., had a strong impact on his linguistic self-confidence vital for his sustained motivation to learn L2. In fact, the completion of the complex task described above greatly contributed to the development of both the student's academic language proficiency and social (interactional) L2 skills.

The examples of experiential learning of L2 illustrated in this section (whether place-based or project-based) highlight the great advantage of fully immersive language learning, which provides L2 learners with ample access to authentic materials, cultural objects, and real-life contexts for learning. Multiple opportunities for learning L2 through everyday interactive engagements with/in the target language environment (both in and outside the school) are a source of experiential language learning and provide a sound basis for "a holistic process of learning, the individual learning process that applies in all situations and arenas of life" (as understood by Kolb, 2015).

Cooperative learning. Many displaced learners report that the FL teaching/learning methods they were exposed to before their displacement differ greatly from those they experience in regular Swiss classrooms, particularly in terms of pair and group work. The focus of an FL class in Ukrainian primary schools was mainly on teaching/learning grammar and vocabulary and the development of reading and writing skills, rather than comprehension and interactional skills in a foreign language.

The communicative approach to language learning employed in Swiss primary schools suggests that real communication and interaction are not only the objectives of learning, but also the means through which learning takes place. In communicative language teaching, whose main objective is to help learners develop communicative competence¹⁸ in reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Abrams, 2020, p.35), language learning is grounded in the primacy of interaction, whereby language is "a vehicle for the realization for interpersonal relations and for the performance of social transactions between individuals" (Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 24).

Cooperative learning is one of the methods based on interaction between learners compared to other forms of teaching, such as presentational teaching. Researchers point out that cooperative learning allows students to work on learning content both independently and collaboratively, exchange knowledge, and construct new knowledge (Jurkowski & Hänze, 2012, p. 260), and also reinforce that cooperative learning implies mutual support in performing a task and "face-to-face promotive interaction", where "individuals encourage and facilitate each other's efforts to complete tasks" (Johnson & Johnson, 2002, p.97). Promoting each other's learning has been proved to have positive effects on both cognitive activities and interpersonal dynamics (ibid.).

Interviews with displaced children conducted in 2022 revealed two opposite perspectives on the approach to language learning (both L2 and FLs) in Swiss schools. Children with higher German proficiency perceived the new communicative method as interesting and effective (although more challenging as well), reported being fully engaged in the new tasks and group activities, and reinforced the benefits of social strategies¹⁹ employed by them in the classroom.

(26) *"I like it when we are told to discuss something in groups of three. We can all talk about the topic, say what we think, say who thinks what... We didn't have this in Ukraine."* (S6:Age12:G6_2023)

¹⁸ *Communicative competence* suggests a speaker's knowledge of sociolinguistic rules, norms, and conventions for a particular language (Oxford Dictionary of Media & Communication, 2020, p.68).

¹⁹ As generated by R. Oxford (1990) in her taxonomy of language learning strategies, along with cognitive, memory, metacognitive, compensation, and affective strategies as other types.

(27) *"I feel most confident in the NMG lesson, because there you can work together, it is in this lesson that we work REALLY well! With my friend ... or sometimes the three of us ... We can discuss the topic ... I get some information, they get information that I don't have, and we exchange information with one another. For example, we had to write a kind of guidebook about the history of the canton, about different periods of its history, so that one could take this book with them as a guide. And that's why it had to be written very well."* (S2:Age13:G6_2023)

Although the student in (27) talks not about the German but the NMG lesson, we find this report very informative in terms of the language-learning component of the task described. In fact, the student focuses on the interactive (social) strategies and instrumental use of language he applies when learning other school subjects. Both discussion and exchange of information are perceived by the student, on the one hand, as generators of his interest in learning other than L2-related content and, on the other hand, as a stimulus for the target language production. Besides, the student's report suggests that he acknowledges the effectiveness of the cooperative learning strategy (that involves a process of social construction or 'collective thinking') in achieving better academic performance in L2 (as *"the guidebook had to be written very well"*) and finding great enjoyment in learning (*"it is in this lesson that we work REALLY well!"*).

Those with lower proficiency level in the target language reported that in regular German lessons it was much easier for them to perform assignments adapted to their L2 proficiency level and intended for individual rather than pair or group work. At the same time, they appreciated the cooperative learning practices and game-based activities they encountered in DaZ classes, which allowed them to feel more confident in interacting with peers whose first language is not German.

(28) *"I like Frau F. She is so kind to all Ukrainians, and if you don't understand something, she explains it. And Frau Y., because she can turn a topic into a game, which will make you enjoy learning this topic."* (S9:Age9:G3_2023)

The interviews with children conducted in 2023 revealed certain changes in their attitudes toward interactive assignments as well as in their learning behavior in the classroom. After ca. 12 to 18 months of instruction in regular Swiss classes, most children, including those who did not enjoy interactive activities in the classroom and who chose to seek help with learning and understanding L2 from their teacher rather than from their classmates, reported needing help from their classmates and feeling more confident in approaching them for help.

(29) S: *It helps when I talk to my classmates more. They correct me sometimes if I say something wrong.*

I: *Can you describe the ideal situation in which you learn German best?*

S: *To have words written down, to learn them better. To remember them better. ... And to communicate more with friends, so they can help and correct me.* (S4:Age10:G3_2023)

Regardless of their L2 comprehension and proficiency level, in the second set of interviews, students more often reported cooperative learning experiences and friendships for learning as useful sources of learning the target language.

(30) *"My friend knows more words than I do, but I can explain grammar to him. And he can explain different words to me. ... And in general, if I study, I discuss it with someone. ... It's easier for me to learn that way"*. (S2:Age13:G6_2023)

(31) I: *Does anyone help you learn these words, or do you learn them yourself?*

S: *Just my three friends: D., C., and A.*

I: *And how do they help you? They speak German, don't they?*

S: *They explain the word in words I understand.* (S9:Age9:G3_2023)

Classroom observations of the participants and post-observation enquiries conducted in 2023 revealed the high effectiveness of cooperative learning and increased motivation to perform L2 learning tasks in tandem with their Swiss peers in students of all groups differentiated in section 4.1. Later in this section, we describe the cooperative learning practices observed in students who reported low

motivation for L2 learning in their interviews (Group C). These cases illustrate how the type of learning activity can influence student learning behavior and motivation to perform an L2 task.

We observed nine-year-old N., a 3rd grade student, who worked with his peer to complete a complex problem-solving task based on multiple reading techniques. The task was intended for practicing comprehension reading by individual learners in a regular Swiss class and involved, along with the reading activity, logical and arithmetical elements. While other children performed the task on their own, N. did it in tandem with his Swiss classmate Mia²⁰, a more knowledgeable peer, who acted as a coach/mediator. The task performed in tandem integrated autonomous reading, collaboration in constructing meaning, and peer teaching to reinforce each student's learning and enhance comprehension. Both children took turns reading the text aloud, paragraph by paragraph, following the instructions and completing the tasks as they read. In randomly shuffled paragraphs, they had to find lexical clues about the sequence of text fragments which had to be put in the correct order. While working on the assignment together, Mia helped N. by explaining where and how to find lexical clues, correcting N.'s mistakes in reading and spelling, and giving instructions on what to do next. In this way, Mia helped N. to cope with a very difficult task, which he most likely would not have been able to complete if he had performed it on his own.

Interestingly, N., who looked disengaged when performing individual assignments and tests, actively participated in pair work: he kept asking Mia clarifying questions, responded appropriately to his peer's words and instructions, did not hesitate to suggest possible clues in the text, and even once tried to correct his peer's mistake when he noticed that she had misspelled one of the verbs.

(32) N: Mia, ich habe [das Verb] 'zu graben' [v]erloren.

Mia: HIER ist es [showing the verb in the text].

(33) N: Wart, wart, wart ... schreib 't' hier. Schau mal!

One of the tasks required putting certain words (verbs, nouns, articles) into the correct form. Before writing down the correct form, students had to discuss it with a peer.

(34) N: [reading his part] Sie wurde der Bauen und zähmten die Tiere auf.

Mia: [correcting N.'s mistakes and pointing to a picture that showed several trees, not one] Hier, Bauer. Sie wurden Bauern und zähmten die Tiere auf.

N: Ja, das habe ich verstanden. (Age9:G3_2023)

Working on the task with his peer, N. felt more relaxed, did not hesitate to ask questions, and tried to establish interpersonal connections with his 'coach', thereby acquiring social interaction skills. N. demonstrated involvement in the task and did not show signs of fatigue, irritation or dissatisfaction with his performance. The student's task behavior observed throughout the tandem work was completely different from the behavior we could observe in the next lesson, when children had to complete one of the reading tasks independently. The child's nonverbal behavior indicated that he needed help to complete the task. He reread the instructions many times, propped his head up with his hands, looked around, looked at his watch, and did not write anything in his notebook until his teacher came up to him to explain what to do. Several teacher interventions were made to support the student in the learning task.

N.'s self-assessment of his work after each task was different. In the first case, the child reported that he coped well with the task, although it was difficult. In the second case, the child said that he could not understand the instructions because there were difficult words and he was disappointed that he failed to complete the task.

(35) I: Do you often perform assignments together with Mia?

N: Today was with Mia. Each time is with different classmates. I work well with all of them. Everyone helps me.

I: I think the task you were performing together with Mia was very difficult.

²⁰ All names used to describe individual learning experiences are pseudonyms.

N: Yes, it was difficult [smiling], but it was interesting. I understood almost everything. (Age9:G3_2023)

Twelve-year-old D. was performing a reading task with his peer. The children took turns reading parts of the text aloud. The roles in the pair work were clearly defined. While one student read aloud, the other student timed their reading, recorded the results in the workbook, and marked reading/pronunciation errors with a highlighter. The children switched roles several times. Although D. still made more mistakes than his reading partner, he could already identify his Swiss peer's errors, which were caused by the interference of Standard German and Swiss German in most Swiss-speaking children. The children then discussed their mistakes and told each other what exactly they would have to improve next time (while reading the next part of the text). In his post-performance report, D. said that he liked reading together, as he could already hear and identify his peers' mistakes (and thereby reinforce his learning), and that reading together helped him to memorize German words better and prevented him from learning incorrectly. (We can also add that D. was making steady progress toward acquiring sociolinguistic competence as such cooperative learning practices in the classroom provide non-native learners with ample opportunities to learn to distinguish between spoken varieties of the target language.)

(36) "I like it when we take turns reading aloud, they hear my mistakes and correct them, and I hear when they pronounce something incorrectly and tell them. It's easier to learn words this way. It's easier when they tell me about my mistakes." (S7:Age12:G6_2023)

Observations of the task behavior of displaced learners involved in cooperative learning activities (e.g., peer or reciprocal teaching) confirmed that they like these activities: they are engaged and active, feel more relaxed and are less afraid to make mistakes, experience less stress or embarrassment than when performing in a group or in front of the class, not only respond to but initiate communication, express their emotions more often (smile, laugh, use facial expressions and gestures).

One of the multiple advantages of cooperative learning practices for displaced students is that they create additional classroom contexts for their interactive engagements with peers aimed at both instructed learning and developing social (interpersonal) relationships important for effective learning. Displaced children show positive attitudes toward L2 learning when the event of learning promotes their friendly interpersonal relationships with their peers. The latter can develop into lasting friendships for learning, which, in turn, can generate the necessary L2 motivation in displaced children to make their friendships for learning extend beyond the classroom.

The cooperative learning practices illustrated above show how L2 activities based on peer interactions increase displaced learners' motivation for L2 learning at the *learning situation level* pertinent to the "situation-specific motives rooted in various aspects of language learning within classroom setting" (Dörnyei, 1994). The data analysis shows that a displaced learner's situational motivation can fluctuate considerably depending on the L2 teaching methods and learning tasks utilized in the classroom in cases where the students' general motivational orientation toward L2 learning is quite low.

Positive cooperative learning experiences with classmates not only strengthen a displaced child's motivation to learn L2, but also prevent their amotivation caused by the child's experiencing feelings of incompetence and helplessness, like in the case of N. performing the reading task on his own.

Code-switching practices. Many displaced students report code-switching in the classroom as a very helpful practice promoting L2 learning. Positive effects of code-switching, both in teacher instruction across a range of curricular subjects and in cooperative/group learning, reported by displaced students relate to all types of the L2 learning settings encountered by them: integration/reception classes, regular Swiss and DaZ classes. Code-switching practices in the classroom, which involved German, Ukrainian, Russian, and English, are reported by displaced children as particularly vital in L2 learning settings immediately following their transfer to the diglossic Swiss school with the new media of instruction. Among the most appreciated L2 learning situations mentioned by displaced learners are those where multilingual practices are allowed and even encouraged by teachers in the classroom to "unpack the meaning" (Martin, 1999, as cited by Ferguson, 2003, p. 3). Research on multilingualism in schools

suggests that code-switching as a communicative and pedagogic resource is appreciated and desirable in terms of both the learners' access to curriculum and interpersonal communication (Ferguson, 2003) and the effectiveness of interactional/cooperative learning practices in a multilingual classroom context (Unamuno, 2008; Schiesser & Nell-Tuor, 2025; Luginbühl & Schmidlin, 2024). Based on the children's reports, we can assert that classroom code-switching as a form of didactic mediation is perceived by displaced learners as a very important tool for getting access to meaningful and successful learning.

(37) *"My classmate, who also speaks Ukrainian, helps me in class, and it's easier for me to understand things."* (S4:Age9:G2_2022)

The effectiveness of code-switching in managing learning in groups of displaced students was also evident during classroom observations. For example, in a DaZ lesson with four L2 students, code-switching was encouraged by the teacher to explicate the rules of an educational card game²¹ the students were being taught to play. In addition to the game's purpose, which was to teach both the target language and logical thinking, the teacher had to explain the complicated rules of a game with which the students were unfamiliar as well as the L2 lexis related to and used in card-playing. One of the participating students, ten-year-old K., who had played the game before, was asked by the teacher to help in teaching the others through applying code-switching. The teacher was telling the rules of the game in German, naming and demonstrating the corresponding actions or symbols. The mediating student was asked to perform the same actions as the teacher demonstrated (*die Karten mischen* (Germ.)/*shuffle cards*, *geben* (Germ.)/*deal cards*, *(jemanden) schlagen* (Germ.)/*beat someone (in a game)*, etc.), repeat the words after the teacher in German and then translate what the teacher was saying and doing into the students' native language, and elaborate the obscure meanings and symbols in the learners' native language so that everyone in the group understood the rules of the game. The children were able to ask clarifying questions in their native language and collaborate to find lexical equivalents in L1 for the corresponding symbols or actions, as well as clarify the nuances of the meanings of new German words. Observation of this learning situation revealed that the more accessible the meanings and rules of the game became, the more engaged the children were. Code-switching practices encouraged by Swiss teachers in group learning contribute to displaced students' active participation in the L2 learning activities, make both the participation and learning accessible to students, especially to those with less proficiency in the target language, and have a positive impact on situational motivation to learn L2.

4.2.3 Social factor. Relationships with peers

Group dynamics. In their reports, some participants talked about their acceptance by a peer group as a factor influencing their emotional well-being and willingness to learn L2. "When children are socially supported and accepted by their peers, they have stronger motivation, have better achievement outcomes, and are more engaged in school" (Wigfield et al., 2019, p. 448). At the same time, almost all participants linked the positive group dynamics encountered in the classroom with their L2 proficiency.

(38) *"YES, all the children already accept me as one of the group, as part of the class. And I feel good."* (S2:Age12:G5_2022)

(39) *"Now, I feel more like part of the class. I feel good. Before, I knew less German."* (S3:Age8:G2_2022)

(40) *"I don't really feel like I'm part of the class. If I knew German well, I'd feel like part of the class, but I don't know German well. That's why it's like this. Everyone tries to be nice to me, but because I don't speak the language, I'm not with everyone else."* (S9:Age9:G3_2023)

Although group dynamics affect all groups of displaced learners, regardless of their age, L2 proficiency level, and linguistic self-confidence, those who are not driven intrinsically and have lower L2 proficiency level prove to be more dependent on their peers to (de)motivate them for language learning.

²¹ Card games as a teaching tool are very common in Swiss primary schools and are used in a variety of ways in different lessons, including those in DaZ classes (e.g., Biberbande (Germ.) / Beaver Gang, Jass, UNO, etc.).

These students, e.g., reported disappointing experiences of verbal bullying (when they were made fun of by their classmates just because they did not understand the language, or were laughed at when they subconsciously switched on to their home language in the classroom to respond to some situations, etc.) or exclusion from peer communication as reasons for their negative attitude toward the target language and/or unwillingness to learn or interact in L2.

(41) I: *Do you want to continue learning German?*

S: *Not really. I have to learn it. If I didn't have to, I wouldn't, because I don't really want to. ... I'd like to leave for Ukraine as soon as possible, and German won't matter there.*

I: *What determines your success in learning?*

S: *Classmates, my mom, and friends.*

I: *How do classmates influence your success?*

S: *There are classmates who treat me badly, and because of that, I don't understand what they say, and there are those who, on the contrary, treat me well and try to explain things so I can understand. (S9:Age9:G3_2023).*

Conversely, displaced students who report belonging to a group are more likely to report their stronger motivation to learn L2.

(42) *"I've made great progress in German. I think I've done well in my studies. I've adapted well to school. I'm completely here. I've already switched to this school. ... And I feel good; I already belong here. ... Of course, I want to continue studying here." (S2:Age13:G6_2023).*

The theme of belonging to a group is found to correlate closely with the type of L2 learning setting, in which displaced learners were placed upon their transition to Swiss school. In the initial stages of L2 learning, the DaZ class setting, characterized by small groups of non-native learners of German, proved to greatly stimulate displaced learners' interest in L2 and was reported by many of them as a place where they belong, while the regular Swiss class structure, marked by the heterogeneous and diglossic student population, proved to decrease L2 motivation in displaced learners and, for some period of time, was not associated with a sense of belonging for many participants.

The theme of belonging to a group is also proved to correlate with interest in participating in social-interactive activities, such as class council (*Klassenrat*, Ger.), among displaced learners. Those who report belonging to the group perceive this regular classroom activity as just another engagement during the school day. Although difficult language-wise, the activity is perceived as meaningful and one in which they participate:

(43) S: *I participate, but I don't talk because it's difficult. It's difficult during Klassenrat too. We sit in a circle, pass the ball around, and talk. We do this once a week.*

I: *What do you talk about?*

S: *You have to say what you liked, what you didn't like, and if you have any questions. For example, they might say they had a good week, that they enjoyed sports or swimming, like this week.*

I: *What did you say?*

S: *Nothing. I just passed the ball to someone else. (S5:Age10:G4_2022)*

Conversely, those who feel excluded from the group report their disengagement in class council and are likely to perceive it as a demotivating experience:

(44) *"They also had a Klassenrat today ... it's like a lesson. They don't write anything down. They just sit in a circle and talk. ... I don't understand anything. I'm looking at the pictures in the book." (S16:Age10:Grade3_2022)*

Goal-directed activities and motivation to learn L2. "Peer groups may exert a powerful influence on individual motivation, especially [...] when students experience transitions to new school environments and social networks, and when processes of identity and self-concept formation are shaped" (Berndt & Keefe, 1995). Data analysis revealed that in the context of cross-country transition to another school, the children's motivation for L2 learning is largely related to their skills in making friends, whether in class or outside the school environment. These may be friendships for learning, when "friends share an interest in achieving well in school" (Ota, 2014), or friendships based on goal-directed activities, such as

sports, shared hobbies, or communicating in social networks. Peer interactions outside the classroom, whether at a sports club or in the neighborhood, have an equally positive impact on a displaced child's social competence and efficiency to interact with peers and build social relationships in the classroom. They help to overcome the communication barrier in the classroom, thereby facilitating the learning and interacting in L2.

Some of the displaced children were driven to use and learn L2, and even L3, by their strong wish to engage in their favorite sports activities.

(45) *"My daughter started going to sports from the very beginning. We found a football club ... she's very keen on football ... she has many friends there. One of her classmates even decided to take up football because Maya does it. Sports help her a lot to communicate with her peers. In general, she is very sociable ... this helps her learn German."* (P:S5:Age10:G4_2022)

(46) *"I play football. I communicate with the team and the coach. We go to competitions. ... In the summer I was in a sports camp ... and I communicated with everyone in German there."* (S10:Age12:G6_2023)

Peer interactions outside the classroom, motivated by goal-directed activities, enhance the displaced learners' "knowledge about social groups" and rules according to which "these social groups interact at the societal and individual levels" (Byram, 1997, as cited in Abrams, 2020, p.42).

(47) *"We communicate a lot after school. On the phones with classmates, ... chatting in our group. Also, I go to birthday parties often. I have a lot of friends here and we spend time together. I like communicating a lot."* (S5:Age11:G5_2023)

Our data also suggest that displaced children's engagement in social interactions outside the classroom is not related so much to their L2 competence (which is frequently the case with peer interactions in the classroom), as to their willingness and need to communicate in a social group. The voluntary dimension of such goal-directed interactional activities strengthens children's motivation to learn L2, although this learning is informal, situation-dependent, and a result of other activities. Children with higher intrinsic motivation for social interaction thereby enhance their opportunities for informal L2 (and/or L3) learning and developing (socio)linguistic self-confidence.

Friendships. The study shows that friendships in the classroom – not necessarily friendships for learning – contribute to displaced learners' social and emotional well-being (stressful learning is not effective) and motivate them to learn. Displaced children in friendship groups are likely to experience belonging, seek help from their peers, and have more opportunities for self-expression. The study also suggests that friendships, both with L2 and L1 speaking peers, can equally impact a displaced learner's motivation to learn L2. In the context of cross-country displacement, friendships and belonging are particularly important for displaced learners' social and emotional well-being. The multiple school/class transfers encountered by displaced children during primary school may force them to change peer groups and build new relationships with classmates each time. In some cases, forced class transitions (e.g., due to a change of residence/municipality and subsequent mandatory change of school) lead to a long-term loss of motivation to learn and interact in L2.

In the first-year interview, eleven-year-old T., who was placed in a regular Swiss class and had L2 support in a DaZ class for international students, reported sports, German, English, and French as his favorite lessons, expressed great interest in L2 learning, and was happy with his friendly and supportive peers:

(48) S: *I really like my class. Everyone supports me – both my classmates and my teachers. We have a very good class! I'm very lucky with my classmates!*

I: *Do you have friends in class?*

S: *Of course! All my classmates are my friends!*

I: *Do you have any difficulties at school?*

S: *No. Everything is fine.* (Age11:G5_2022)

In his second-year interview, the student reported no interest in learning German and other subjects, talked a lot about the unproductive L2 learning he was currently experiencing at school, and avoided

any discussion of the class he was currently in. All the positive references to his class, teachers, lessons, and relationships with classmates turned out to be made about his previous Swiss school, which he attended the year before. He admitted that he did not like studying in his new class, did not interact with his classmates after school and would hurry home (to the refugee dormitory where his family lived), where he could interact with peers in his home language. All of his local Swiss friends, with whom he had interacted well the previous year, remained at his other school, and he would like to return to either the school he attended the year before or to his Ukrainian school. T.'s mother explained that their family had been relocated to another part of the city, resulting in her son being transferred to a different school, a new class, and that he greatly missed his previous class and had been unable to fit in with the new group for several months. She said her son had lost interest in his studies and the language, and she did not know what to do. (Age12:G6_2023).

Another example of the effects of (lost) friendship on L2 motivation is the destructive learning behavior of eleven-year-old B., a student in a monolingual integration class for Ukrainian children. The child was so upset by his friend's transfer to another school that he refused to follow the teacher's instructions or respond to her questions in the target language. He deliberately switched to his home language in the lesson, demonstrating his reluctance to make any effort to learn after being separated from his friend. (S24:Age11:Integration class_2022).

Integrative orientation and motivation to learn L2. Another aspect related to displaced children's motivation to learn L2, which was reported by the participants and later confirmed during classroom observations, is the integrative orientation of displaced students. When placed in regular Swiss classes of almost the same size and composition across cantonal primary schools (Swiss classes are, in most cases, heterogeneous structures of 18 to 20 students with multiple migration backgrounds), displaced students show different dispositions toward the L2 group and signal different levels of willingness to communicate with this group by choosing different strategies of peer interaction. Some of the students display positive dispositions toward the L2 group, seek to make friends/interact with their Swiss peers at school, and, in some cases, even deliberately avoid interactions with L1 speaking peers, both among their classmates and among those studying at the same school. Other students employ the opposite strategy and tend to avoid L2 interactions every time there is an opportunity to approach other L1 speaking peers, seek friendships within their ethnolinguistic group both at school and places of residence, and report as their school friends only peers from DaZ classes where they interact in small groups of non-native speakers of L2. These children report that they choose to stay with other Ukrainian peers during school breaks and communicate with them after school.

(49) S: *I often raise my hand in class, but I don't talk to my classmates.*

I: *Why? Why don't you talk to them?*

S: *I don't know. They are either busy with something else or I am not interested in talking to them. [I] don't know what to talk about with them ... during the breaks I go to the meeting place where we meet with the Ukrainian mates, and we talk there. And sometimes, when they are not there, I don't know what to do, I can go to the playground to play football with someone, I can play with my Swiss classmates there.* (S20:Age12:G6_2023)

Observations of these children in the classroom showed that they tended to avoid L2 interactions with their Swiss classmates unless these interactions were required by a task or the teacher's instructions, initiated L2 interactions only with their teachers, and chose to go home after classes in the company of other Ukrainian peers. In their post-observation exchange, one of the teachers mentioned that twelve-year-old S. was reluctant to move to a different desk in the classroom to face the other students, but preferred to remain at his desk, sitting with his back to the rest of the class, and always sought to avoid group games and activities during breaks unless his participation was mandatory.

Conversely, nine-year-old P. in (50) demonstrates willingness to communicate and establish in-group relationships with her Swiss classmates and does not perceive the diglossic context as a hindrance to shaping social interactions in and outside the classroom.

(50) S: *We have three third-grade classes at G. [the name of the school], and we're all now placed in*

different classes [referring to her former classmates from the second grade], but I still talk to everyone. We talk during breaks.

I: Do you communicate with your Swiss classmates only at school?

S: After school, too. I get invited to all sorts of parties, too. And I talk there. And my first Swiss friend ... we often communicate with her, too.

I: What do you usually talk about with your Swiss friends?

S: During breaks, we talk about what's new or tell jokes [...]

I: What language(s) do you speak with your classmates?

S: At school, many children speak a mixture [of German and Swiss]. They can say something in German, something in Swiss. I remember what they are saying and then say it too. (S3:Age9:G3_2023)

4.2.4 Parental involvement

Positive effects on motivation. The study revealed multiple forms and methods of parental involvement that can have beneficial impact on the displaced children's motivation to learn L2. These include joint learning of L2, demonstrating and sharing L2 knowledge (by parents who speak German or are learning it), promoting L2 learning at home, e.g., by showing interest in learning the language and/or participating in social interactions in L2, monitoring the child's homework in German, communicating with teachers, or practicing L2 interactions at home.

When learning the target language (usually in specialized German language courses for migrants), parents take on the role of students, learning the same things as their children. When language learning becomes a shared activity, interactions between children and parents become goal-directed and joint efforts are likely to bring positive learning outcomes for both. Both displaced children and parents who practice joint learning at home report regularly helping each other navigate complex German grammar, explaining the meaning of difficult words and new realia, translating words or sentences from one language to another, helping each other with German homework, etc. – another example of cooperative learning, albeit occurring at home.

(51) *"YES, I help my mom with German. I can help her translate words. She can ask how to decline a word, for example." (S6:Age12:G6_2023)*

(52) *"Well, yes, I ask my mom sometimes, but she doesn't always know it. I help my mom, and she helps me sometimes. We're almost at the same level now." (S3:Age9:G3_2023)*

A child participating in such joint learning often acts as a teacher, explaining complex material to their mother or father. Some mothers reported that sometimes they were able to understand a difficult grammar or lexis taught in their German lessons only when their son or daughter explained it to them at home.

(53) *S: I help my mom more often [smiling with content].*

P: I often ask my daughter to explain the difference between some words, and she does! For example, the difference between 'stimmt' and 'doch'. It was so difficult for me to figure out when to say what. (P:S5:Age11:G5_2023)

Faced with the need to explain something to someone else (a sibling, or an adult), the child consolidates their knowledge and skills and builds self-confidence by receiving recognition from their parents. Furthermore, the child's mentoring role positively influences their motivation for further learning.

Another effective practice is promoting L2 at home. Displaced parents reported a variety of methods they employ to promote their children's learning L2 at home: helping children choose extracurricular activities that integrate L2 interaction, advising on choosing a book in L2 to read at home, fostering friendships with local peers and neighbors, arranging for their children to have additional L2 lessons with a private tutor, monitoring their child's homework, etc.

It should be noted that monitoring their child's homework is a widespread practice among both Ukrainian parents and children (at least in elementary school) and is a standard form of extrinsic

motivation for children. Although this practice is ineffective in the early stages of children's education in Swiss schools (due to the lack of competence of many displaced parents in the language of school (German)), it becomes more viable and effective once parents acquire sufficient knowledge of German. The latter also increases opportunities for displaced parents to communicate with teachers (for example, during teacher-parent meetings) and receive feedback and recommendations from teachers regarding their child's education.

During the second-year interviews, all participating parents mentioned joint discussions (*"Elterngespräch"*) with the teacher and child at school (in some cases, still conducted with the assistance of an interpreter), which allowed parents to learn about their child's progress at school, receive the teacher feedback on the child's motivation and learning behavior, discuss with the teacher the difficulties and problems the child was facing in their studies/peer interactions, and, for the parents of the upper-grade schoolers, to learn about which secondary school their child would most likely attend in the future and why, etc. Effective and regular teacher-parent communication, timely teacher feedback on the child's academic performance and/or learning difficulties, and teacher approachability were reported by displaced parents as necessary to ensure that the efforts they invest into supporting their children's learning at home are consistent with those made by the school and teachers. Since exercising parental authority and control and making active interventions in children's education are part of the Ukrainian primary school culture and are perceived as something natural by most Ukrainian schoolchildren, the latter may see parental control and interventions as a necessary impetus to do better at school.

This is how an eleven-year-old child talks about the results of his mother's communication with his classroom teacher, which suggests the mother's immediate and effective intervention:

(54) *"Before the teacher-parent meeting, I'd missed a lot of homework. And after the parent meeting – NOT A SINGLE missed homework!!!"* (S1:Age12:G6_2023)

Teacher-parent communication and teacher engagement can contribute to a positive emotional climate both in the classroom and at home. The mother of nine-year-old Emilia says she is very happy that her daughter's integration class teacher sometimes comes to the refugee dormitory where they live to meet with parents and children.

(55) *"My daughter likes her teacher, Frau F., and enjoys learning the language in her lessons. She isn't shy about speaking German in the classroom. The last time Frau F. visited us, Emilia showed her our room, and they even hugged..."* (P:S18:Age9:G3:Integration class_2022)

Parents with some knowledge of German also report engaging in second language interactions with their children at home and note that these interactions are sometimes initiated by the children themselves, which correlates with cases of higher intrinsic motivation in children.

The second-year interviews with parents revealed significant changes in their expectations regarding the outcomes of L2 acquisition by their children. All parents reported that their children were making significant progress in German. Parents' heightened expectations of their children's educational progress in Swiss schools and successful acquisition of German (compared to those reported by them upon their children's transfer to the Swiss school) correlate with the children's increased motivation to learn the second language.

Two other factors that positively influence displaced children's motivation to learn the target language are family reunification after a long separation and a change in the family's life prospects. Parents who reunite and seek to remain in the host country tend to be more involved in their children's education and seek additional opportunities for them to learn and communicate in the target language. Such families may decide to discontinue their children's online education in their home country and plan their children's educational trajectories according to the opportunities available in the host country.

Negative effects on motivation. Motivated children versus demotivated parents. Parents who lack the motivation to integrate into a new environment and/or learn L2 may unknowingly become demotivators for their children. Those reluctant to accept the new school or new curriculum fail to

understand the demotivating impact their own perceptions of the new reality, e.g., of the new school culture, may have on their children's dispositions, emotional well-being, attitudes toward the new school/teacher/subject etc., L2 motivation, self-concept of their L2 abilities, or willingness to set and achieve goals in the new learning environment.

"Families ... are an important source of pedagogical experience and a part of the learning continuity. ... For multilingual education to be successful, parents' support is necessary..." (Herzog-Punzenberger et al., 2017). Parental involvement and parental motivation largely contribute to the learning-supportive environment at home. Parental amotivation and counterproductive communication at home can be harmful to the child's motivation to learn and interact in L2.

Parent-child interactions observed during interviews demonstrated how parents' differing attitudes toward the new education system, curriculum, and school culture influenced their children's attitudes and motivation to learn the school language. In families where parents focused on uncertainty rather than on new learning opportunities for their children, and on the child's difficulties rather than on the educational benefits of the new school experience, children were more likely to adopt a negative attitude toward the new school, develop a "can't-do" attitude toward learning a new language(s), and demonstrate low motivation to learn L2. A particularly negative impact on children's motivation was observed in cases where parents constantly compared the two schools, the home and the foreign one, making the differences between them more visible to the children, or when they encouraged the children to interact with their Ukrainian classmates (both with former classmates from the Ukrainian school via social media and with displaced peers living in the same refugee dormitory) more than with their local Swiss peers and classmates. Shaping social interactions with peers according to the in-group language (i.e., L1) hinders the development of motivation to learn L2 in displaced children.

Conversely, children in families where parents demonstrated integrative motivation, had positive dispositions toward the new school, and reported numerous benefits of the new educational environment, showed a higher motivation to learn the language of the school to gain full access to learning.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The research data show that social factors (group dynamics and belonging, friendships for learning, participating in goal-directed social activities, etc.), factors relating to L2 learning context (diglossic school, multiple forms of cooperative and place-based learning, explicit L2 instruction in L2 support structures (DaZ), classroom code-switching practices to enhance learning, etc.) together with the individual-learner-related variables (age, language repertory, previous experience of learning the target language, learners' integrative orientations, self-concept of L2 abilities, etc.) and psychological factors (certainty/uncertainty about future educational goals, developing linguistic self-confidence, achieving sufficient sociolinguistic competence to differentiate between L2 and L3 and to overcome the communication barrier in a diglossic classroom, parental involvement) shape the L2 learning experiences and impact displaced learners' (de)motivation for L2 learning.

Younger primary school children are more intrinsically and socially motivated for L2 learning than upper primary school children. The latter are more likely to perceive the target language as a tool for learning and getting access to better educational opportunities, hence, are more responsive to academic grades and assessment as extrinsic forms of motivation.

Behavioral manifestations of motivation identified through interviews with participants and classroom observations include language choice in communication with peers/friends in school and out-of-school settings, willingness to communicate and establish friendships for learning with L2 speaking peers, task behavior, volunteering answers in the classroom, and frequency and quality of meaningful interactive engagements in/with L2 environment.

Displaced primary school students are likely to experience motivational highs when they 1) are

exposed to explicit language instruction in the DaZ classes; 2) are successful in making friendships for learning; 3) recognize their L2 efficacy and experience linguistic self-confidence through accomplishing practical tasks in L2; 4) overcome the communication barrier in regular Swiss classrooms; 5) experience positive group dynamics; and/or when 6) the teacher feedback and assessment of the student's academic performance in L2 are encouraging for them to set goals (reported by upper primary school students approaching the transition to secondary school); 7) parents show genuine interest in learning L2 and create learning-supportive environment at home.

Displaced students are likely to experience motivational lows when they 1) encounter a diglossic school upon their placement in regular Swiss classes; 2) are excluded from peer interactions at school or when the classroom climate is unfavorable; 3) experience several/multiple school transfers; and/or when 4) the DaZ class instruction is terminated when the learner's L2 proficiency is still insufficient to follow the school curriculum independently; 5) the teacher's assessment of the student's academic performance in L2 assumes their low L2 performance and lower chances for expected secondary school paths; 6) parents have a critical attitude toward the host school and, consciously or not, foster this attitude in their children; 7) parents themselves experience de-/amotivation with regard to L2 learning, which can negatively affect their child's L2 motivation.

Motivation for L2 learning in children with no initial genuine interest and no threshold proficiency in L2 is proved to be more dynamic and depends more on external/contextual factors (such as the type of learning setting, the availability of and the length of provision in L2 support structures, opportunities for out-of-school interactional engagements in L2, friendships for learning, multiple forms of parental involvement, etc.). Uncertainty about future (educational) goals proves to be a stronger demotivating factor in L2 learning for upper primary school students.

Friendships and belonging promote L2 learning and increase L2 motivation by helping to reduce/overcome barriers to peer interactions and coaching through which L2 learning often occurs. Although group dynamics and belonging affect all groups of displaced learners, regardless of their age, L2 proficiency level, or linguistic self-confidence, those who are not driven intrinsically and have lower L2 proficiency prove to be more dependent on their peers to (de)motivate them for language learning.

The motivation to learn L2 in displaced children is also influenced by changes in family life prospects: it increases in the case of the 'stay-prospect' and decreases in the case of the 'return-home-prospect' that the family set their mind on.

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Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Supervision, Validation, Writing – original draft, and Writing – review & editing were carried out by the sole author.

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Абрамічева Олена. Мотивація до вивчення другої мови: досвід опанування німецької мови у швейцарських школах учнями початкової школи, вимушено переміщеними з України. *Журнал Прикарпатського університету імені Василя Стефаника*, 13 (3) (2026), 31-60.

Спираючись на масштабні дослідження мотивації до вивчення другої мови, а також на основі лонгітюдного дослідження сприйняття дітьми, вимушено переміщеними з України, швейцарської початкової школи та досвіду опанування ними німецької мови як другої, авторка досліджує соціально-контекстуальні фактори, які відіграють значну роль у формуванні мотивації дітей – біженців з України до вивчення німецької мови на початкових етапах їхнього навчання у швейцарських школах. Дослідження, проведене в рамках якісної методології, виявило численні фактори, що впливають на мотивацію дітей-біженців до вивчення другої мови в контексті німецько-швейцарської диглосії в школах німецькомовної Швейцарії. Ґрунтуючись на реляційному підході до мотивації «людина в контексті», автор зосереджується на тому, як окремі учні сприймають контекст навчання та свій досвід вивчення другої мови, а також як їхнє сприйняття та взаємодія з навчальним середовищем другої мови впливають на їхню мотивацію та навчальну поведінку під час вивчення німецької мови на початковому етапі розміщення у школах країни, що їх прийняла. Дані, отримані за допомогою напівструктурованих інтерв'ю з вимушено переміщеними дітьми та їхніми батьками, контекстуалізуються за допомогою спостережень за дітьми в класі в різних навчальних умовах, що надає авторці змогу зосередитися на контексті навчання в класі та контекстуально обумовленій мотивації, тоді як дані поздовжнього дослідження уможливають розгляд мотиваційних змін із часом. Численні мотиваційні впливи, індуктивно отримані з даних, згруповані в чотири основні категорії: середовище вивчення другої мови, методи вивчення другої мови, стосунки з однолітками та участь батьків. Якісний контент-аналіз даних показує, що вплив середовища, в якому вивчається друга мова, та груп однолітків є найсильнішими порівняно з іншими факторами, що впливають на учнів, і варіюється упродовж дослідження. Дослідження також підтверджує важливість успішної адаптації дітей-біженців до двомовного шкільного середовища країни, що їх приймає, для розвитку мотивації до вивчення другої мови.

Ключові слова: вивчення другої мови, мотивація, соціально-контекстуальні фактори, середовище вивчення другої мови, діти – біженці з України, початкова школа.