The effect of L2 teaching method on motivation and proficiency

Giulia Sulis
S2729571

MA in Applied Linguistics
Faculty of Liberal Arts
University of Groningen

Supervisors:
Marjolijn Verspoor (primary supervisor)
Rasmus Steinkrauss (second reader)

05/06/2015
Table of contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ........................................................................................................... 2
0. ABSTRACT .......................................................................................................................... 3
1. INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................. 4
2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND .......................................................................................... 6
  2.1 GARDNER’S SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL MODEL ............................................................... 6
  2.2 THE COGNITIVE PERIOD ............................................................................................. 9
    2.2.1 The self-determination theory ................................................................................. 10
    2.2.2 The attribution theory ............................................................................................ 12
    2.2.3 Goal theories ........................................................................................................... 14
  2.3 THE L2 MOTIVATIONAL SELF SYSTEM .................................................................... 15
  2.4 PROCESS-ORIENTED MOTIVATION .......................................................................... 17
  2.5 A DST APPROACH TO MOTIVATION ......................................................................... 20
  2.6 SECOND LANGUAGE MOTIVATION AND TEACHING METHODS .............................. 22
    2.6.1 Motivational strategies in the language classroom .................................................. 23
    2.6.2 Current instructional approaches .......................................................................... 24
  2.7 SUMMARY THEORETICAL BACKGROUND ................................................................ 26
3. STUDY 1 - PROFICIENCY AND MOTIVATION IN AIM AND GL LEARNERS ............... 28
  3.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS ............................................................................................... 28
  3.2 INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS - GRANDES LIGNES AND AIM ................................... 29
  3.3 PARTICIPANTS ............................................................................................................. 30
  3.4 MATERIALS AND PROCEDURES .............................................................................. 31
  3.5 DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSES ....................................................................... 34
  3.6 RESULTS ...................................................................................................................... 36
4. STUDY 2 - TWO AIM GROUPS COMPARED ..................................................................... 49
  4.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS ............................................................................................... 49
  4.2 INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD .......................................................................................... 50
  4.3 PARTICIPANTS ............................................................................................................. 50
  4.4 MATERIALS AND PROCEDURES .............................................................................. 50
  4.5 DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS ....................................................................... 52
  4.6 RESULTS ...................................................................................................................... 53
5. DISCUSSION ....................................................................................................................... 68
6. CONCLUSION ...................................................................................................................... 80
7. REFERENCES ...................................................................................................................... 83
8. APPENDICES ...................................................................................................................... 92
Acknowledgements

I would like to express sincere thanks to my supervisors Marjolijn Verspoor and Audrey Rousse-Malpat. I am extremely grateful and indebted to them for sharing their expertise, sincere and valuable guidance and continuous encouragement throughout the thesis writing process.

I would have never been able to finish my thesis without the support of all my friends and classmates. I would like to thank my dear friends Simona Cucca, Marirosa Pili and Federica Bonu for always being there for me throughout all these years, even at long distance, and encouraging me at all times.

I want to express my gratitude to all the people that made this year in Groningen one of the best of my life, and in particular Érica Robledo Muñoz, irreplaceable friend that shared with me this great venture from the very first day.

Most importantly, I would like to express my heart-felt gratitude to my amazing family: my parents Andreina and Antonio, and my sister Silvia. Without their love, continuous support and concern none of this would have been possible.
0. Abstract

Although motivational research determined an evident link between motivation and instructional practice in the second language classroom, no study so far provided empirical evidence for the prevalence of a teaching method among others in terms of its effect on learning motivation. This study attempts to fill this gap in the motivational research by means of an investigation of the relationship between teaching method, L2 learning motivation and proficiency over the course of two academic years. The participants in this study were 107 Dutch students from four different classes instructed French at beginner level with either an implicit (AIM) or explicit (Grandes Lignes) instructional method. As suggested by the results of this research, the teaching method by itself does not play a role in directing students’ beliefs and attitudes towards language learning, and in contributing to shape students’ L2 motivational self; the combination of the method with a specific teacher, however, seems to be the main factor accounting for differences in motivation and proficiency in our participants.
1. Introduction

A great deal of research has been carried out in the SLA field during the past decades aimed at investigating learning motivation and its relationship with language achievement. Different conceptualizations regarding the nature of the motivational construct have been elaborated, as well as a series of measures designed in order to determine its extent and quality in L2 learners. For several years, motivational research was grounded on the theories elaborated by Gardner within a socio-psychological framework, deemed as paradigmatic in the SLA field and mainly focused on the reasons underlying L2 motivation and the contexts in which it takes place. New approaches and theories on motivation arose in the 1990s as a result of a cognitive psychological shift in motivational research, aimed at explaining the relationship between individuals’ beliefs, goals, expectations and learning achievement. The focus on the language learner’s self led Dörnyei to the elaboration of his L2 motivational self-system, which represented an attempt to explain motivation in terms of the learner’s perceived and projected selves during the learning process. For decades, motivation was considered as a stable concept, but a series of process-oriented theories on motivation concentrated on the temporal variable, and therefore to the changes motivation is subject to over time. In line with this view, Dynamic System Theory recognizes motivation as a non-linear system of interacting variables, whose interplay changes from unsteadiness to relative stability due to the self-organisational properties of the system itself. Although motivational research has offered throughout the years several perspectives and frameworks of reference in matter of motivation and its relationship with language learning, very few studies have focused on teaching implications in relation to this construct. Different motivational strategies have been elaborated in these terms, aimed at providing language teachers with a series of suggestions to motivate their students during their learning process; however, only one study has been conducted heretofore to determine
empirically whether motivating strategies of different sorts were more effective than others (Dörnyei, 2001).

Notwithstanding the evident link between motivation and instructional practice in the language classroom, no study so far has provided empirical evidence for the prevalence of a teaching method among others in terms of its effects on learning motivation. The present study will attempt to fill this gap in the motivational research by investigating the effects of two different instructional methods on classroom motivation, taking also into account how motivation affects proficiency and whether it changes over time. The two teaching methods taken into consideration in this study, Grandes Lignes and AIM, are respectively grounded on focus-on-form and focus-on-meaning principles. While focus-on-form instructional approaches aim at enhancing the learners’ communication skills combining task-based activities with implicit or explicit grammar explanations, focus-on-meaning based teaching methods rely on language not as object of instruction but as a medium used to interact in and outside of the classroom, and includes language classes uniquely provided in the learners’ L2.

The purpose of the present study is to investigate and compare the extent to which the two L2 teaching approaches afore mentioned affect learning motivation, to examine the relationship between motivation and language proficiency, and to find out whether these develop in a linear fashion or, on the contrary, they alter over time. A triangulation based on an empirical and qualitative study will be presented in this research, involving a group of Dutch beginner learners of French, taught by different teachers through the Grandes Lignes and AIM methods. The empirical study will be conducted through a series of questionnaires and tests aimed at assessing the students’ motivation towards L2 learning and proficiency during the course of two years. The qualitative study, on the other hand, will be based on a series of teacher interviews, which will provide an insight into individual differences in students’ and teachers’ attitudes concerning L2 teaching methods and the way they relate to L2 motivation and proficiency.
2. Theoretical Background

In the framework of second language acquisition, a conspicuous number of theories have been elaborated regarding the impact of motivation on L2 learning. Different aspects of this compound construct have been investigated, in order to provide not only empirical evidence for a correlation between motivation and L2 learning but also to determine how motivation works as a complex system of interacting variables, such as attitudes towards the L2, language anxiety and integrative orientations among others.

The importance of motivation as a predictor of L2 learning has been recognized and extensively researched from the 1970s within a socio-psychological framework. Gardner and Lambert (1972) are considered the pioneers of L2 motivational research and provided a series of theories and studies in this respect that dominated the linguistics debate for several decades. From the 1990s on, motivational research has been subject to a shift; in fact, cognitive psychology contributed to investigate this construct by means of new perspectives and approaches. The focus on the individual’s ambitions, goals and eagerness to learn a second language resulted in the elaboration of Dörnyei’s L2 motivational self-system, grounded on both mainstream psychology and L2 theories (Dörnyei 2005; 2009). Finally, the process-oriented approach on motivation, which emerged in the late 1990s as a result of the studies conducted by Dörnyei and Ottò (1998) and MacIntyre, MacMaster and Baker (2001) among others, led to a new understanding of this construct, based on its complex and dynamic features, and served as groundwork for the application of Dynamic System Principles to the empirical research on motivation (Waninge, Dörnyei, & de Bot, 2014).

2.1 Gardner’s socio-educational model

Among the plethora of L2 motivation models that emerged throughout the past decades, Gardner’s socio-educational model (1985) has been considered to be one of the most influential,
both for the theoretical reasoning behind it and for its practical application in empirical research. Gardner’s theories on motivation primarily rely on two aspects of this complex construct; in the first place, they concern the purposes related to second language learning, the learners’ goals and expectations. In the second place, they pertain to the conditions under which language learning and therefore motivation takes place; according to the researcher, in fact, context has a major role in determining people’s attitudes towards second language learning and for this reason, it cannot be left out of consideration.

The analysis of the learners’ goals in terms of second language acquisition, and consequently the reasons why people chose to study a second language, led Gardner to distinguish between two types of orientations towards second language learning (Gardner & Lambert, 1959), which he defined as instrumental and integrative orientations. The term instrumental orientation refers, according to Gardner’s definition, to the intention to learn a second language in order to achieve a practical purpose, such as obtaining a job or getting a better education. Integrative orientation, on the other hand, relates to the “social-emotional purposes” of learning a second language (Gardner, 1985, p.11). Individuals that are integratively oriented present not only a positive attitude towards the target language community, but also the desire to be acquainted with its culture and possibly become part of it (Gardner & Lambert, 1959; Gardner, 1985). The concept of integrative orientation cannot be analysed leaving out of consideration the particular cultural context in which Gardner’s motivational research took place. The unique linguistic and cultural situation of Canada, in which most of the researcher’s work was carried out, led Gardner to believe that the desire of learning French by Canadian English speakers was driven by a genuine and sympathetic interest in the French speaking community and therefore by the purpose of interacting with the members of this community (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1985).

The concept of integrativeness, which has been subject to both empirical and theoretical research by Gardner and his Canadian associates, along with the attitudes towards the target
language speaking community, has been reinterpreted throughout the years by both Gardner himself and a series of scholars, that doubted the generalisability of this construct outside the multicultural Canadian context. While Gardner in later studies refers to integrativeness as “Openness to Cultural Identification” (Gardner, 2006), remaining therefore within a socio-psychological framework of reference, other researches such as Dörnyei (2010) provided a reconceptualization of the term, which takes into account a series of other aspects. According to Dörnyei (2009), in fact, the term integrativeness not only can be used with reference to the disposition towards another cultural community, but can also imply the desire to identify with what Dörnyei refers to as the ‘ideal self’ and ‘ought to self’. These constructs will be further examined later in this theoretical background.

While the investigation of the goals and purposes related to L2 learning led Gardner to the development of theories related to the learner’s orientation towards the L2, the interest in examining the contexts in which motivation takes place resulted in the above-mentioned socio-educational model (Gardner, 1985), which has been subject to several revisions throughout the past forty years. This model acknowledges, in the first place, four types of individual differences, such as intelligence, language aptitude, language anxiety and motivation (Gardner, 1985) in the present literature review, only motivation will be taken into account. According to Gardner, two types of contexts need to be taken into consideration when it comes to L2 motivation. The first one, the cultural context, is related to the target language speaking community, and therefore to the concept of integrativeness, previously discussed. The second context to which Gardner brought his attention is the educational environment in which language learning takes place. The attitudes towards the learning situation, which are related to the latter type of context and along with the integrativeness represent an essential component of motivation in the socio-educational model, refer to formal explicit instruction. The cultural context, in the view of the researcher, is on the other hand classified as “informal” context, and
therefore concerns the language the learner acquires without being explicitly instructed. The attitudes towards the learning situation are related to the actual language learning experience, and refer to the learners’ beliefs and dispositions in this respect; according to Gardner, these attitudes can somehow predict not only motivation but in general language acquisition (Gardner, 1985). Among the attitudes towards the learning situation, it is possible to identify, for instance, the attitudes towards the teacher or the teaching method, whose investigation is also one of the aims of this study.

The operationalisation of the learners’ attitude towards the situation, along with the concept of integrativeness and of motivation in general, led the Canadian researcher to the elaboration of a questionnaire, the AMTB (Attitude/Motivation Test Battery), which was also taken into consideration for the elaboration of the surveys used to conduct this study (Gardner, 1985). The AMBT test was developed in order to assess the motivational construct by means of a series of questions concerning the following categories: integrativeness, motivation, language anxiety and attitudes towards the learning situation (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993). The AMTB initially employed three different methods to evaluate the items presented in the questionnaire: Likert scales, semantic differential judgments, and multiple-choice alternatives. Only Likert-scaled items, however, were presented in the following versions of the questionnaire (Gardner, Lalonde, & Moorcroft, 1985; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991). The AMTB underwent validation by means of several empirical studies, such as the one conducted by Gardner (1993) and more recently by Bernaus and Gardner (2008), which proved a correlation between AMTB and different measures of language achievement.

2.2 The cognitive period

While motivational research has its foundations in social-psychology, from the 1990s it has been subject to extensive research by cognitive psychology, which provided new approaches
and perspectives to the investigation of this construct. Dörnyei (2003) identified in this respect three main theories among others, which led to a series of pedagogical implications and whose relevance is widely recognised in the SLA field: the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), the attribution theory (Weiner, 1992) and different sorts of goal theories (Pintrich & Schunck, 2002; Zimmerman, Bandura & Martinez-Pons, 1992).

2.2.1 The self-determination theory

The self-determination theory, attributed to Deci and Ryan (1985) and still considered influential in the SLA and cognitive psychology fields, is primarily grounded on the distinction among different types and orientations in terms of motivation, and in particular between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, whose definition was elaborated by Porter and Lawler (1968). The term intrinsic motivation refers to the motivation to carry out an activity because it provides spontaneous satisfaction to the individual, who finds it engaging and interesting (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, concerns the external consequences that result from achieving a goal or completing a task, for instance getting a high grade in an academic setting. Extrinsic motivation does not pertain, unlike intrinsic motivation, to the enjoyment of the task itself but it is related to its external outcome, and for this reason, it is related to an instrumental value (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Extrinsic motivation moves learners to accomplish a series of activities to reach an outcome that is not represented by the learning itself; intrinsic motivation, on the contrary, would lead to “high quality learning and creativity” (Ryan & Deci, 1985, p.55), and for this reason it is the type of motivation that need to be supported and fostered by teachers in the academic setting. While according to Porter and Lawler (1968) the sum of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation would lead to a general sense of satisfaction, Deci (1971) claims that these two types of motivation have an effect on one another, and therefore present patterns of interactions that may vary over time and within different individuals. According to the cognitive evaluation theory (Ryan & Deci, 1985; Ryan
Deci, 1980), which can be considered as a sub theory of the self-determination theory, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation do not complement each other; on the contrary, a series of extrinsic motivator factors, which can be identified as material rewards or deadlines among others, may negatively compromise intrinsic motivation. Among these extrinsic motivation factors, responsible for undermining intrinsic motivation, the authors identify, for instance, tangible rewards, deadlines and evaluations (Ryan & Deci, 1985). On the other hand, according to the cognitive evaluation theory, the factors accountable for increasing intrinsic motivation are related to the learners’ feeling of autonomy and on the positive feedback provided by the teacher. In fact, in order to feel intrinsically motivated, and to enjoy the learning process, learners need to perceive themselves as competent and autonomous; therefore they need to feel both responsible for their work and at the same time to be reassured regarding their learning improvement (Ryan & Deci, 1985; Deci, Koestner & Ryan, 1999). The feeling of autonomy and competence represent an essential component of intrinsic motivation; extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is associated with the perception of control and pressure, because it does not rely on the learners’ willingness but to externally established factors. However, according to the self-determination theory, extrinsic motivation is not externally regulated in an absolute way, but the extent in which it can be controlled is subject to variation. Ryan and Deci (1985) refer to the process through which individuals take in a regulation of an external type as ‘internalisation’. Extrinsic motivation may be subject to internalisation by means of three types of regulations (introjected, identified and integrated), which are not conceived as separate processes but that represent, on the contrary, three steps of a continuum between autonomously determined and externally controlled motivation.

The pedagogical implications of the self-determination theory have been the starting point of a study conducted by Noels, Clément and Pellettier (1999), aimed at defining the students’ perceptions towards teachers’ communicative style. In particular, this research sought to find
out the ways teachers foster learners’ autonomy and they supply them with effective feedback, which are the intrinsically motivating factors identified by Deci and Ryan (1985). The results of this study show that intrinsic motivation is responsible for effective language learning; in particular, intrinsic motivation is deemed to foster motivational intensity and learning confidence, and on the other hand to reduce students’ anxiety. According to Noels, Clément and Pellettier (1999), therefore, the way teachers communicate with their student has an essential role in determining their type and extent of motivation, because through positive feedback and autonomy enhancement they can alter the learners’ motivational orientations.

2.2.2 The attribution theory

The attribution theory, developed by Weiner and associates within a cognitive functionalism framework, aims at investigating the individuals’ perception of the attributes responsible for a determinate behaviour and, in particular, for achievement motivation. The study of attribution dates back to the 1950s, when Heider (1958) attempted to identify what elements can be considered as determinants of behaviour; he especially focused on two behavioural factors, ‘can’ and ‘try’. While ‘can’ refers to the intrinsic properties of the individual, which are not subject to a great extent of variation, ‘try’ is deemed to be related to the individuals’ temporary objectives and effort expenditure (Weiner, 1974). The distinction between these two constructs has been the subject of a series of researches on achievement motivation; in fact, the relationship between causal ascription and self-reward (Weiner, 1974) provides the foundations of the attribution theory. The individuals’ perception of what causes successful achievement or failure in the academic setting have been extensively investigated by Weiner, who examined in depth the perceptions of both teachers and students in terms of ability and effort (Weiner, 1974). The author came to the conclusion that students low in ability but high in effort are more positively rewarded than students that show a high extent of both ability and effort (Weiner & Kukla, 1970). In addition, he claims that different perceptions of causality are responsible for
individual differences; while people showing a high extent of achievement motivation tend to attribute success to effort, less motivated individuals usually associate failure not with a lack of effort but, on the contrary, with a lack of ability (Weiner and Kukla, 1970). Therefore, different perceptions in matter of what causes a favourable or an unsuccessful outcome can also lead to disagreement and frustration in the classroom setting, especially between students and teachers (Weiner, 1974).

The attribution theory has clear pedagogical implications; in fact, it provides a way to interpret and understand not only individual differences in terms of achievement motivation, but also different patterns of interpersonal relationship within the classroom context. However, different critiques have been moved towards this perspective on achievement motivation; Covington and Omelich (1979), for instance, conducted a study aimed at finding out the relationships between causal attributions and failure in the classroom achievement in order to reinterpret Wiener’s attribution theory. The two scholars came to the conclusion that on the one hand students that put a great amount of effort in accomplishing a determinate task may consequently lack in terms of ability; on the other hand, students who attribute failure to lack of ability tend to reduce their effort, since they want to avoid a “public admission of low ability” (Tollefson, 2000, p.72). According to Covington and Omelich (1979), who define effort as a “double edged sword”, failure attributed to lack of effort is related to the need to preserve someone’s sense of self-worth. As claimed by Tollefson (2000), therefore, encouraging students to put more effort subsequently to failure does not always result in their effort enhancement. Thus, other factors need to be taken into account in order to explain how students perceive effort, ability and outcome, as for instance “the value of the rewards associated with the task, students’ outcome and efficacy expectations, goal orientations, levels of task involvement, age, and attributions for success and failure on school-related tasks” (Tollefson, 2000, p.73).
2.2.3 Goal theories

Understanding students’ goals, the way they perceive their achievements and the strategies used to attain them can provide insight into various type of motivational orientations and consequently into the relation between motivation and outcome.

Within the fields of cognitive psychology and SLA, different models of goal achievement motivation have been developed in the past few decades. According to Pintrich, whose theories have formed the conceptual basis of the goal orientation debate, the term ‘goal’ refers to “potentially accessible, conscious cognitive representations” (Pintrich, 2000a, p. 103). In Pintrich’s view, learners and individuals in general are subject to different stimuli in terms of goals, whose cognitive perception is subject to variability over time and within different contexts. De la Fuente Arias (2006), in his analysis of normative models of achievement motivation, listed several types of academic goals that are related to students’ self-regulation processes. Individual differences in terms of goal inevitably lead, according to Seifert (2004) to the adoption of different types of motivational strategies. In addition, these motivational strategies can be regulated and adjusted in order to fit different types of situation, as shown by Wolters’ research (1998). The first type of goals mentioned by De la Fuente Arias (2006), are task-involved or learning goals, which concern the students’ satisfaction obtained from the completion of a task (Pintrich, 2000b). Students that tend to be learning-oriented tend to attribute successful learning outcomes to effort, rather than ability, and failure to the employment of incorrect learning strategies (Covington, 2000). The second type of goals, to which the author refers as ‘performance goals’, involve the students’ perception of their abilities, and they are related in particular to their desire to perform better than others (De la Fuente Arias, 2006; Pintrich, 2000a). Due to the focus on their abilities, performance-oriented
students tend to be more afraid than those adopting other types of goal orientations by the feeling of incompetency (Covington, 2000). Finally, ‘ego-involved goals’ regard the ways ability is perceived with ‘normative’ and ‘comparative’ reference towards other individuals (De la Fuente Arias, 2006). A series of studies have been conducted seeking to find out what type of goal orientation more highly correlates with successful learning outcomes. While Seifert (2004) claims that students associated with task-involved goals scored the highest grades, a study conducted by Núñez, Martín Albo and Navarro (1995) reported that learning goals positively correlate with learning strategies but, on the other hand, they negatively correlate with study difficulties.

The adoption of a determinate perspective towards someone’s own goals is not stable but is subject to variation, due to both external and internal factors. Teachers and parents, according to Covington (2000) and Locke and Latham (1990), are able to direct students’ goals by means, for instance, of rewards or punishment, in order to influence their self-efficacy beliefs and therefore their motivation towards the achievement of a determinate task. However, the results of a study conducted by Zimmerman, Bandura and Martinez-Pons (1992), proved that students are not always keen to accept externally imposed goals; their achievement motivation and outcomes, on the contrary, largely depend upon their perceived self-efficacy and self-motivating orientations.

2.3 The L2 Motivational Self System

The way self directs behaviour, and therefore the processes through which individuals generate goals and expectations and transform them into action has been subject to extensive research in different areas of L2 motivational research and psychology. The investigation of the self-perception of learners, and how it affects motivation towards the accomplishment of learning goals led to the elaboration of a series of theories regarding the interplay of multiple self-
identities to which individuals may associate themselves during their learning process. Carver and White (1994) underlined the necessity to consider the individual self in relation to the multiplicity of ‘possible selves’ that reflect what one might become, what he would like to become and what he would avoid to become. A similar perspective towards the individual selves was taken by Markus and Nurius (2006) and Higgins (1987), which presented two distinct theories aimed at highlighting the contrast between the actual self and other imaginative selves, which Markus and Nurius (2006) refer to as ‘future self-guides’. According to the authors, three types of future self-guides could be responsible for motivating the individual towards the accomplishment of an action: ideal selves, selves that we could become and selves that we are afraid of becoming. Higgins (1987), on the other hand, distinguished between one ideal self and one ought-to self within the same individual; while the ideal self reflects the set of characteristics that one would like to possess, the ought self refers to the “attributes that one believes one ought to possess” (Dörnyei, 2009, p.13). This distinction provided the basis for Higgin’s ‘self-discrepancy theory’ based on the assumption that motivation is the force deemed to reduce the discrepancy between the individual actual self and his ideal and ought self (Higgins, 1987; Dörnyei, 2009).

Dörnyei’s L2 motivational self-system not only is related to the above mentioned self-theories, but it was elaborated in order to provide a reinterpretation of the concept of ‘integrativeness’ (Gardner, 1985) on which a large part of motivation theory has been grounded for the past decades (Dörnyei, 2009). While Gardner and Lambert (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1985) identify ‘integrativeness’ as the aspiration to incorporate with the target L2 community, Dörnyei (2009, p. 15) refers to the same term as the desire to “identify with the individual’s L2 self-concept”. Language learning motivation, in Dörnyei’s view, need to be investigated in terms of learners’ self-knowledge and perceptions. His L2 motivational self-system consists of three components: ideal self, ought to self and L2 learning experience. The ideal self is,
according to Dörnyei, the L2 speaker that one would like to become; the ought to self represents the characteristics that one is likely to own to meet his expectations and prevent an undesirable outcome; the L2 learning experience, finally, refers to the features of the learning environment and the way they affect learners’ experience. While the first two components are similar to the ones identified by Markus and Nurius (2004), the L2 learning experience represents a unique characteristic of Dörnyei’s L2 motivation self-system, and was included in the system due to the fact that motivation cannot be investigated omitting consideration on the extent of engagement with the learning scenario (Dörnyei, 2009).

Dörnyei’s L2 motivational self-systems offers a frame of reference that can result in a broader understanding of the students’ perspectives towards their goals, ambitions and keenness in terms of second language motivation and lead to the implementation of a series of motivational strategies in the L2 classroom. Language teachers, according to Dörnyei (2009) could contribute to directing students towards the construction of their own L2 ideal self by providing them with effective role models. Once learners assume a perspective on their L2 ideal self, this can be supported and maintained over time by means of different classroom activities such as communicative tasks, aimed at creating a favourable language experience and at helping them to reduce the disparity between their actual, ideal and ought to selves (Dörnyei, 2009).

2.4 Process-oriented motivation

In order to investigate the motivation construct, different aspects and variables that may affect motivation and its relationship with language learning have been taken into consideration and undergone empirical research. Although the large number of studies in these terms present different perspectives on motivation, and intend to explore diverse areas of this construct, three main conditions of human behaviour are usual subject to analysis by motivation theories and research, according to Dörnyei (2000, p. 520): “the choice of a particular action, persistence
with it, and effort expended on it”. While social psychology and cognitive psychology tend to focus on the reasons for performing an action, and the endeavour related to it, process-oriented motivation theories concentrate on the time variable, and therefore on the way motivation is subject to change over time. Motivation is seen, according to this framework, “not so much a constant state but rather a more dynamic entity that changes in time, with the level of effort invested in the pursuit of a particular goal oscillating between ups and downs” (Dörnyei & Ottò, 1998, p. 45).

Heckhausen (1991) was one of the first motivational researchers to highlight the need to consider motivation not as a stable aspect of human behaviour but as a process subject to various degrees of fluctuation over a temporal axis. In collaboration with Kuhl and associates, Heckhausen identified several stages and sequences within the motivational process, which were presented in their Action Control Theory (Heckhausen & Kuhl, 1985). With the term ‘action control’, the authors refer to the “self-regulatory effort” (Kuhl, 1986, p. 424) which is needed to achieve a given goal and is administered by a series of specific mechanisms that intervene in the process of implementation of the individuals’ purpose. The Action Control Theory distinguishes between two main phases in terms of learners’ goals, orientations and volitions underlying the headway from the development of goals to the actions undertaken to accomplish them: the pre-decisional and post-decisional phase. The pre-decisional phase is related to the process of emergence and formation of the individuals’ desires, aspirations and goals, the decisions upon them and the evaluation of the concrete chances of their achievement. The post-decisional phase, on the other hand, involves the executive stage of motivation, and therefore the individuals’ determination and volition towards the accomplishment of their objectives; in particular, this phase entails the preservation of motivation and its management (Heckhausen & Kuhl, 1985; Dörnyei, 2000).
The Action Control Theory served as basis for the development of different process models of motivation, such as the one elaborated by Ottò and Dörnyei (1998), specifically related to L2 learning motivation. Otto and Dörnyei’s process model of motivation is grounded on two main dimensions: Action Sequence and Motivational Sequence (Ottò & Dörnyei, 1998). The Action Sequence consists of a preactional phase, an actional phase and a postactional phase. During the preactional phase of the motivational process, the learners’ desire and hopes take the forms of goals, and goals are subsequently transformed into intentions. The distinction between goals and intentions is related to the enacting commitment implied by intentions (Ottò & Dörnyei, 1998). The last stage of the preactional phase, finally, involves an action plan, which includes all the information on the intended action.

During the actional phase three different processes take place that would lead to the final outcome and therefore to the accomplishment of the action: subtask generation and implementation, appraisal process and application of a variety of action control mechanisms (Ottò & Dörnyei, 1998; Dörnyei, 2000). This phase includes the performance of the planned subtasks, the evaluation of external stimuli that may affect the accomplishment of the action, as well as the individual progress towards it, and finally a series of action control mechanisms that “enhance, scaffold or protect learning-specific action” (Dörnyei, 2001b, p.89).

The postactional phase does not regard the accomplishment of the action per se, but it starts when the action has been already completed, and relates to the evaluation of the outcome of the action and its comparison with the initial goal and expectancies. In addition, the last phase of the process model involves the articulation of a series of internal standards and action-specific strategies that contribute to forge the learners’ experience and to help them to enhance their sense of identity (Ottò & Dörnyei, 1998; Dörnyei, 2000).
The second dimension of the process model of L2 motivation is related to the motivational influences that affect the preactional, actional and postactional sequences, both through supporting the achievement of the planned action or, on the other hand, reducing the individuals’ effort and commitment in carrying out the given action. The motivational influences that have an impact on the preactional phase are defined as instigation force, and regulate the learners’ intentions to implement the action; the actional phase involves a set of executive motivational influences that affect the outcome of the action in progress while the postactional ones concern the learners’ evaluation of the entire process, including “attributional style, self-concept beliefs and the effects of feedback” (Dörnyei, 2000, p. 529).

A process motivational approach can present several pedagogical implications in terms of monitoring and enhancing students’ motivation in the language classroom. In fact, this perspective allows a deeper understanding of the way the interaction of different motivational factors varies over time and, in particular, in the different stages involved in the enactment of learning tasks (Dörnyei, 2000). On the basis of this consideration, teachers could enhance students’ motivation at different phases of their learning progress through a series of motivational strategies targeted not only at creating a favourable situation for the arousal of motivation but also at the regulation and maintenance of motivation over time.

2.5 A DST approach to motivation

Likewise process-oriented perspectives, the Dynamic System Theory (herein DST) approach to motivation deem this construct not as a stable and fixed property of the individual but as a phenomenon characterised by a high extent of variability and therefore subject to change over time. DST, according to Van Geert (2008, p. 183) does not represent a definite theory aimed at explaining general phenomena on the basis of causal relationships, but rather “a general view on change, change in complex systems, in particular, or, systems consisting of many interacting
components, the properties of which can change over the course of time”. In a DST approach therefore, motivation and more in general language learning are considered as complex systems, characterised and affected by a number of interacting variables that are responsible for their variability. In a study conducted by Waninge et al. (2014) on motivation in the framework of a DST perspective, three main characteristics of dynamic systems are examined: change, stability and context. An essential characteristic of dynamic systems, in fact, is their non-linearity; motivation, in this respect, does not remain stable over time, nor does it evolve in linear fashion. Change in a dynamic system may be interrupted by periods of relative stability, defined by DST as attractor states, which intervene in the system as a result of its self-organisation properties (Waninge et al., 2014). However, as highlighted by Verspoor (2015), the investigation of variability of a dynamic system over time, such as the one represented by motivation, cannot omit consideration of the initial conditions; while at an initial stage the interaction of different sub-systems causes variability in both L2 development and motivation, once an attractor stage is reached it is unlikely that a great amount of variability takes place.

According to the results of the study conducted by Waninge et al. (2014), contextual factors, as well as individual differences in the initial extent of motivation, are responsible for the alternation of change and attractor states in students’ L2 motivation. Among these contextual factors they list, for instance, learners’ attitudes towards the teacher, the learning situation and the subject of study. Dörnyei, MacIntyre and Henry (2015) refer to the set of contextual, temporal and personal factors intervening on motivation as Directed Motivational Currents, which he defines as the combination of forces characterised by dynamic relationships, which have an impact over the different variables interplaying in the system.

A DST approach not only can be applied to the analysis of changes in the quantity of motivation over time, but also to its quality. In particular, a number of studies focused on the fluctuation of learners’ perceived, ideal and ought to selves on a timescale. Henry (2015), for instance,
investigated the L2 self under a DST perspective, coming to two fundamental conclusions. Ideal selves are subject to variation based on the evaluation of the concrete possibilities of success; learners’ future self guides can therefore alter as a result of their interplay with a series of other variables. In fact, according to Henry (2015), students’ engagement during the performance of learning activities has an effect in shaping and developing their self-guides and at the same time cannot be considered regardless of the learning environment. In addition, other factors may contribute to the creation, evolution and transformation of L2 possible selves, such as learning experiences or positive/negative feedback (Henry, 2015).

The investigation of the motivation construct under a DST perspective leads to a series of considerations that L2 teachers may take into account when dealing with students’ changes in motivation along a time axis. For instance, a deep understanding of the dynamics between changes and attractor states in the learners’ quantity and quality of motivation would help teachers develop strategies in order to keep them engaged and to stimulate their interest in language learning (Waninge et al., 2014). In addition, providing positive feedback to students, or enhancing their learning autonomy, would work as a motivational booster, contributing to the self-regulation of their motivational system.

2.6 Second language motivation and teaching methods

So far the theoretical background has attempted to provide an overview of a series of motivational theories elaborated in the frameworks of SLA, cognitive and mainstream psychology. This section will focus on practical issues related to the motivational construct, and in particular on the theories and empirical studies related to the classroom application of the principles above mentioned, in order to find out what teachers can do to motivate students and sustain their motivation over the course of time. At present, no empirical or qualitative study has been conducted in order to find out which L2 teaching method works best in order to
foster and maintain motivation in language learners; the current study represents an attempt to fill this gap in the L2 motivational research. However, a few studies aimed at providing theoretical and empirical evidence for a connection between teachers’ motivational strategies, and the extent and quality of motivation in their students.

2.6.1 Motivational strategies in the language classroom

Different indications have been given by motivational researchers in terms of strategies that teachers could adopt to enhance motivation in language students in the form of teaching implications; Williams and Burden (1997), for instance, provided 12 motivational strategies based on a cognitive perspective, concerning the importance of involving students in making decisions in matter of language learning and goal setting, fostering intrinsic motivation, creating the conditions for a supporting learning environment and providing informational feedback. Dörnyei and Czisér (1998) attempted to identify the relevance a series of motivational strategies by means of an empirical study based on teachers’ beliefs, which resulted in the development of ‘Ten commandments for motivating language learners’. Among these motivational macro strategies, Dörnyei and Csizér listed, for instance, the necessity for teachers to create a good classroom environment, promote learning autonomy and increase learners’ knowledge regarding the target L2 community (1998). Ellis (2005) argues that, in order for intrinsic motivation to take place, learners need to be engaged in activities where they create meaning with a pragmatic purpose. Other studies aimed at verifying whether there is an agreement between the teachers and students’ perceptions in matter of perceived frequency of use of motivational strategies (Bernaus & Gardner, 2008). The results of their study showed a significant difference in these; the researchers attributed this lack of correlation to the fact that teachers tend to use strategies with which they feel at ease, rather than focusing on strategies that are perceived motivating by their students. Other studies such as the ones conducted by Ibarran, Lasagabaster and Sierra (2007) and Noels et al. (2001) focused in particular on
students’ perceptions of classroom activities and communicative styles adopted by teachers. Ibarran et al. (2007) reported that both the Basques and foreign students involved in their research tended to prefer classroom activities based on communicative tasks that required their active participation, as well as authentic material, instead of activities uniquely based on the textbook. Noels et al. (2001) on the other hand, found out that students who felt their teachers as controlling tended to lose their sense of autonomy, while receiving informative feedback boosted their perceived competence.

The effectiveness of teachers’ motivational practices, finally, has been subject to investigation by Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008), who based their research on the four categories of motivational strategies identified by Dörnyei (2001). These categories concern the creation of basic conditions for the development of motivation in the classroom, the actual generation of motivation in students through focusing on their values and attitudes, the preservation of motivation during the course of the learning process by establishing a series of subgoals and finally the encouragement of reflection upon what has been learnt (Dörnyei, 2001). The results of the research carried out by Guilloteaux and Dörnyei proved that teachers’ motivational strategies in the classroom have a positive effect on students’ behaviour and achievement, highlighting the importance of teaching practice in enhancing and maintaining learners’ motivation.

2.6.2 Current instructional approaches

As the current study looks at the motivational impact of two different instructional approaches, it is important to give a short summary of the main ones. At present, several instructional approaches are employed in second language teaching, which present several differences in the way they provide students with a larger amount of explicit or implicit instruction and whose effectiveness has been subject to a number of studies that present rather contradicting results.
Long (1991) distinguished among three main types of L2 instructional options: focus on forms, focus on form and focus on meaning.

Focus on forms concerns a traditional approach to language teaching, where the focus is upon language forms, explicitly and systematically instructed by means of grammar explanations. This instructional approach perceives language not as medium of communication nor as resource employed to conduct task-based activities, but as object of study itself. Teaching methods based on focus on forms typically make use of syllabuses where language features are treated and taught separately, often presented in the first language of students, and assess learners’ language proficiency through activities aimed at verifying their grammatical competences rather than actual communication skills.

The focus on meaning approach, on the other hand, relies on meaning as the object of instruction; this instructional treatment aims at the enhancement of students’ procedural language knowledge and communication skills through rich input, language exposure and authentic learning material. Linguistic forms are not taught explicitly; on the contrary, they are supposed to be acquired by learners incidentally (Norris & Ortega, 2001). In addition, the learners’ first language is almost never used in the classroom, in order to recreate a situation of language immersion in which students necessarily have to express themselves and interact with classmates and teachers in the target L2.

Focus on form instruction also deems language as medium of communication; however, learners are encouraged to be aware of the linguistic features of the meaningful input they are exposed to (Schmidt, 2001). Ellis (2001) distinguished between two types of focus on form: planned and incidental. While planned focus on form relies on a series of strategies such as input flood, input enhancement or output corrective feedback in order to draw learners’ attention to linguistic forms, linguistic awareness in incidental focus on form arouses intuitively
during meaning-based activities (Loewen, 2005). A number of empirical studies have been conducted in the field of SLA aimed at verifying which instructional approach among the ones afore mentioned is more beneficial to second language learning. However, different and contradicting results emerged from these researches; while some studies provided evidence for a presumed higher effectiveness of focus on form over focus on meaning (White et al. 1991, Spada & Lightbown 1993 and Lyster 1994), others presented opposing results (Beretta & Davis, 1985; White 1998). This may be due, in the first place, to the fact that there is no general agreement on what makes a teaching approach more beneficial to language acquisition than another one. Secondly, the results of this type of research may be biased according to the way effectiveness is measured and the amount of time of the treatment (Rousse-Malpat & Verspoor, 2012).

2.7 Summary theoretical background

The ever increasing attention dedicated to L2 motivation throughout the past decades indicates that this construct is deemed as predictor of successful language learning, and therefore it is a variable whose consideration cannot be omitted in the investigation of L2 acquisition and development. A conspicuous number of theories have been elaborated in the motivational field aimed at investigating, quantifying and explaining this construct. Motivational research was initiated by Gardner, in collaboration with Lambert (Gardner & Lambert, 1959) with the purpose of verifying not only the link between motivation and proficiency, but also the conditions under which motivation arises in students and which factors contribute to shape this construct. The ‘cognitive shift’ (Dörnyei, 2009) in motivational research offered new insights in terms of learners’ ambitions, goals and orientation towards language learning, and provided the foundations for the elaboration of theories related to the motivational identity of language learners, as in the case of Dörnyei’s L2 motivational self-system. The process-oriented and DST
theories on motivation included in their investigation the time variable, deemed as responsible in changes in learners’ motivation over the course of the learning process.

Even though the abundant motivational literature provides different approaches and conceptualisations to the analysis of motivation, few studies focused on the motivation at a classroom level. Although research has been carried out to verify the relationship between instructional method and L2 proficiency, with contrasting results, no study so far focused on the link between instructional method and L2 learning motivation. Study 1 will attempt to fill this gap in motivational research by means of an investigation of the relationship between instructional method, motivation and proficiency, taking into account the presumed changes over time of these two. Study 2 will investigate further two classes with the same teaching method as they show significant differences in Study 1 to find out which other variables need to be taken into account in the analysis of L2 classroom motivation and students’ motivational identity.
3. Study 1 - Proficiency and motivation in AIM and GL learners

The motivational theories examined in the background section of this study offer a series of distinct perspectives on this complex construct and the way it relates to L2 proficiency. Although a correlation has been generally recognised between L2 learning motivation and proficiency, the link between instructional method, motivation and proficiency has not been subject to investigation so far in the field of L2 motivational research. The purpose of this study is to verify to what extent written proficiency is affected by motivation and teaching method. In addition, a diachronic dimension will be taken into account in the present study to determine whether motivation and proficiency are subject to variability over time.

In order to investigate the relationship between instructional methods, L2 learning motivation and proficiency, and whether these change over time, an empirical study will be conducted on a group of beginner learner of French from a Dutch secondary school, instructed with two different teaching methods. This study will be carried out by means of a series of motivational questionnaires, aimed at determining the extent and quality of motivation in the students participating in the research, as well as written assignments intended to assess their French proficiency.

3.1 Research questions

RQ1. Is there a relationship between teaching method and motivation?

RQ2. Is there a relationship between teaching method and L2 proficiency?

RQ3. Do L2 motivation and proficiency change over time?
3.2 Instructional Methods - Grandes Lignes and AIM

The two teaching methods whose effects on motivation will be compared in the present study are ‘Grandes Lignes’ and ‘AIM’. Grandes Lignes is a focus on form based French teaching method, developed in the Netherlands and targeted at students of secondary schools at HAVO/VWO level. The Grandes Lignes French class is mainly based on the use of a textbook and an exercise book, divided into sections, each one dedicated to a different topic. In each section, new vocabulary is presented, accompanied with pictures and translations in Dutch; in addition, students are provided in each chapter with grammar explanations in Dutch and language chunks to memorise. In order to practice their writing French skills, students are asked to complete grammar exercises in which they have to provide translations from Dutch to French or to fill the gaps with the correct form; almost no free production exercises are presented in the textbook. The speaking exercises are based on a series of questions that students have to pose to their classmates, the answers of which are based on the instructions (in Dutch) provided in the book; the listening tasks rely on a series of questions based on the recordings heard in class. Although it is claimed to be based on Communicative Language Teaching principles, Grandes Lignes does not provide real classroom communication; teachers interact with students in their first language, do not provide authentic and meaningful French input and do not encourage spontaneous production. Moreover, the assessment criteria are not based on the learners’ communication skills, but rather on their lexical and syntactic accuracy.

AIM (Accelerated Integrative Method), on the other hand, is grounded on focus on meaning principles, and it is targeted at the enhancement of students’ communication skills and fluency by means of meaningful input provided exclusively in the target L2, combined with gestures associated to words and structures. The reason for using this twofold approach is based on the fact that “L2 learners need to experience language aurally, visually, and kinaesthetically in
order for internalization to take place” (Arnott, 2011). In the AIM class, students are not only exposed to the L2 through the input they receive from the teacher, but are also provided with authentic material such as stories or songs, through which they acquire vocabulary in context and language chunks that they are encouraged to reuse in free production and communicative tasks such as drama plays that involve both speaking and writing. Students are not allowed to use their L1 in class, but are challenged from the first days of L2 instruction to use the L2 to fulfil their communicative needs and interact with their teacher and classmates. In the first months of instruction, only speaking and listening skills are developed; reading and writing lessons and activities are introduced later, in order to recreate the natural order of first language acquisition. Grammar and language features are not taught explicitly but are implicitly learnt as a result of continuous exposure, repetition and language use.

Research aimed at investigating the effectiveness of this method led so far to incongruent outcomes, as reported by Arnott (2011). While, according to several studies, students taught through AIM outperformed their non-AIM counterparts in terms of oral production (Maxwell, 2001; Michels, 2008), others concluded that AIM does not make a difference in overall language proficiency (Bourdages & Vignola, 2009; Mady, Arnott, & Lapkin, 2009). However, a longitudinal study over two years conducted by Rousse-Malpat (2011) in the Dutch high school context provided evidence for better results of AIM students over a control group on different measures of writing proficiency, in particular accuracy and complexity.

3.3 Participants

The participants in the current study were 107 Dutch students aged 11/12 years old from the public secondary school ‘Esdal College’ in Emmen, the Netherlands. Before participating in this study, all the students were absolute beginner learners of French, and did not receive previous French instruction in an academic setting; therefore, according to the CEFR (Common
European Framework of Reference), their level of French at the beginning of their first year of French education was A0. The participants were recruited from four different first-grade classes at HAVO/VWO level, to which they were randomly assigned. Two classes (AIM1 and AIM2) received French instruction through the AIM method, while the two other classes (GL1 and GL2) were taught French according to the Grandes Lignes (hereafter GL) method. During Year 1 of French instruction (2013-2014), the teacher of one AIM class (AIM2) and one GL class (GL2) was the same, while the other AIM and GL classes were instructed by different teachers. The teacher of class AIM1 was a French native speaker, while the other two teachers (classes GL1, GL2 and AIM2) were Dutch native speakers. The weekly amount of hours dedicated to the French classes was the same for the four classes (about two hours).

The table below provides an overview of the four classes taking part in this study, their teachers and the instructional method adopted in each of them.

Table 1. Participants Study 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GL1</th>
<th>AIM1</th>
<th>AIM2</th>
<th>GL2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF STUDENTS</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD</td>
<td>GRANDES LIGNES</td>
<td>AIM</td>
<td>AIM</td>
<td>GRANDES LIGNES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEACHER</td>
<td>T1</td>
<td>T2</td>
<td>T3</td>
<td>T3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4 Materials and Procedures

Motivation

The effects of different types of teaching methods on motivation were investigated by means of Questionnaire 1, employed to collect motivational data for a bigger research project of the
University of Groningen. Questionnaire 1 was administered to 185 students from 5 different Dutch high schools situated in the Groningen province (Gomarus, Zernike, Cygnus, Marne and Esdal), all beginner learners of French and instructed with both focus-on-form and focus-on-meaning teaching approaches. This questionnaire was mainly based Gardner’s AMTB, previously discussed in the theoretical background section of this study, and intended to test the following constructs:

- Interest in Foreign Languages
- Parental Encouragement
- Motivational Intensity
- French Class Anxiety
- French Teacher Evaluation
- Attitudes towards Learning French
- Attitudes towards French speaking people
- Integrative Orientation
- Desire to learn French
- French Course Evaluation
- Instrumental Orientation.

The 66 items of Questionnaire 1 were to be answered by the participants on a 5 points Likert scale ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’. The questionnaire was administered in June 2014 through an online survey and was dispensed to the students in their native language (Dutch). Questionnaire 1 underwent validation by means of a pre-test, administered to 26 students from a class not involved in the project, showing an excellent index of internal consistency ($\alpha=0.923$).
Proficiency

In order to measure the participants’ level of L2 proficiency, it was decided to make use of free-response written assignments since these could provide an indication of students’ productive skills on the basis of a series of different aspects, such as vocabulary use, syntactic complexity, coherence and cohesion.

The written proficiency tests consisted of a series of free response written assignments regarding different topics that have been previously handled in class, and whose vocabulary was already known to the students. The structure of each assignment was similar; the instructions could present, for instance, an invented character in a given context, and were combined with a picture. Students were therefore asked to create a story based on the instructions, as in the following example: “Here is Padma. He is an alien. Tell his story!”.

Another type of assignment that students were asked to carry out concerned the creation of a new ending to a story previously known, such as “Three little piglets”, also integrated with a picture showing the characters.

The four classes of students were administered four written assignments during the academic year 2013-2014. They were given approximately 20-30 minutes to complete each task, which they performed in class under testing conditions. The first assignment was handed in after 6 months of French instruction, due to the fact that AIM students started practicing their writing skills only after 3 months since the beginning of the academic year. The writing assignments were evaluated by two independent raters who provided for each a grade from 0 to 5 on the basis of a scale inspired by CEFR but specifically aimed at judging the written proficiency of beginner learners (see Appendix. Rousse-Malpat, 2014).

Change of motivation and proficiency over time
With regard to our third research question, two supplementary mini-motivational questionnaires were dispensed to the students. The two additional mini-questionnaires aimed at providing additional information regarding students’ variability in their extent of motivation over the course of their first and second year of French instruction. They were administered in November 2013 and January 2015 to the participants of this study together with their written assignments. They consisted of the following 4 questions, answered by the students with a range of scores from 1 to 10.

1. How much do you like the French language?
2. How much do you like the French class?
3. How much do you like your teacher?
4. How well can you understand French?

In order to verify the changes in proficiency over time, the four written assignment carried out during the first year by the four classes of participants were taken into consideration.

3.5 Data Processing and Analyses

Motivation

In order to verify whether differences in the L2 teaching methods adopted in class resulted in a disparity in the amount and quality of motivation in our participants, different types of analysis were carried out. For the Likert-scale based Questionnaires 1, each response was assigned a value for scoring purposes (for instance, Strongly Disagree corresponded to 1, Moderately Disagree to 2). The responses for the negative statements (e.g. French is boring) were reconverted.

Questionnaire 1 was validated by means of a pre-test whose internal consistency was measured through a reliability analysis. Another reliability analysis was conducted on Questionnaire 1,
followed by a factor analysis, aimed at determining whether patterns of correlation could be observed among the 66 items presented in the survey. By means of the factor analysis it was possible not only to identify which factors may be considered as predictor of motivation but also to establish which items in the questionnaire could not be deemed as an adequate measure of this construct. In order to provide more meaningful results, the reliability and factor analyses were conducted on the whole sample available (185 students), while to compare the different classes and methods only the data for Esdal College were taken into consideration.

In order to compare the two groups AIM and GL on motivation, a paired-sample t-test was conducted on the data from Questionnaire 1. A repeated measure analysis was also conducted on Questionnaire 1, with the purpose to verify whether there was a significant difference between each of the four sub-groups (GL1, GL2, AIM1 and AIM2) in terms of motivation.

With the purpose of verifying whether the two methods scored differently in terms of the main subcomponents of motivation, a two-way repeated measure analysis was conducted on the following motivational factors, previously determined by the factor analysis as strong predictors of motivation: ‘Interest in the French class’, ‘Attitudes towards the method’, ‘Attitudes towards the teacher’, ‘Interest in the French language’ and ‘Instrumental orientation’.

In order to determine whether there was a difference between each of the four subgroups in terms of motivational factor, a two-way repeated measure analysis was conducted, taking into account the same motivational factors.

**Proficiency**

The 4 written assignments administered to the four classes during the course of two academic years underwent a series of analyses aimed not only at determining which classes and methods presented the highest proficiency level but also at investigating the link between motivation and proficiency. The overall means of the 4 written assignments administered in the academic year
2013/2014 were used as measure to compare the two teaching approaches (AIM and GL) and the four distinct classes by means respectively of a paired sample t-test and a repeated measures analysis.

*Change of motivation and proficiency over time*

The investigation of the changes over the time in the participants’ learning motivation and written proficiency was conducted through a series of paired sample t-tests and repeated measures analyses. A paired sample t-test was conducted on the whole set of data for the two mini-motivational questionnaires administered in November 2013 and January 2015 to the 4 classes of students. Two way repeated measures analyses were conducted to estimate the differences in the students’ motivation according to the teaching method employed (groups AIM and GL) and the respective classes (subgroups GL1, AIM1, AIM2, GL2). In order to investigate the degree of variability over time in the participants’ proficiency, repeated measures analyses were carried out on the results of the four written assignments administered over the course of the first academic year of the participants (2013-2014).

### 3.6 Results

*Motivation*

In order to validate Questionnaire 1 on motivation, a pre-test was administered to 26 students of a class not involved in this research project. The reliability analysis conducted on the pre-test proved an excellent index of internal consistency ($\alpha=0.929$). Questionnaire 1 also underwent a reliability analysis, showing excellent internal consistency ($\alpha=0.958$). A factor analysis was conducted on Questionnaire 1 in order to determine distinct correlating groups among the 66 items in the survey and therefore to identify a series of factors that could be
considered as predictors of motivation (See Appendix). By means of the factor analysis, four main categories of motivational factors were identified, as shown in 3 below.

Table 2. Factor analysis – Questionnaire 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTOR 1</th>
<th>FACTOR 2</th>
<th>FACTOR 3</th>
<th>FACTOR 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Interest in French class</td>
<td>• Interest in learning French</td>
<td>• Interest in foreign languages</td>
<td>• French class anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attitude towards the teacher</td>
<td>• Instrumental orientation</td>
<td>• Motivational Intensity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attitude towards the teaching method</td>
<td>• Parental encouragement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Integrative orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The items that presented an index of correlation $r<0.5$ belong to the following categories:

- Parental encouragement
- Motivational intensity
- Integrative orientation

In order to compare the effects of the two instructional method object of this study on motivation during Year 1, a paired sample t-test was conducted on the data from Questionnaire 1 for the groups AIM and GL. There was a significant difference in the scores of group AIM (M=3.086, SD=0.666) and group GL (M=3.149, SD=0.73); $t(65)=-4.995, p <0.05$. Figure 1 displays the difference between the two groups in terms of motivation rate.

![Figure 1. Motivation AIM and GL – Year 1](image)

The motivation of the four distinct classes of Esdal College that participated in this study during Year 1 was compared by means of a repeated measures analysis. Mauchly's Test of Sphericity indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated, $\chi^2(5) = 66.394, p < .0005$, therefore, a Greenhouse-Geisser correction was used. There was a significant difference between each subgroup, GL1 (M=3.125, SD=.870), AIM1 (M=2.883, SD=.710), AIM2
Figure 2 shows the differences between each subgroup in terms of motivation.

In order to compare the two groups AIM and GL in terms of the five main subcomponents of motivation (‘Interest in the French class’, ‘Attitudes towards the method’, ‘Attitudes towards the teacher’, ‘Interest in the French language’ and ‘Instrumental orientation’), a two-way repeated measure analysis was conducted on the statements related to these categories. There was not a significant effect of method (F(1,4) = .069, p=ns). There was not a significant effect of factors (F(4, 16) = 2.154, p=ns). There was not a significant interaction between method and factors F(4,16) = .971, p=ns. Table 3 shows the descriptives for the two groups AIM and GL according to the different motivational factors. Figure 3 displays the means for the two groups.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AIM</th>
<th>GL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in the French Class</td>
<td>2.600</td>
<td>.4985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes towards the method</td>
<td>3.411</td>
<td>.5694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes towards the teacher</td>
<td>3.339</td>
<td>.4936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in learning French</td>
<td>2.375</td>
<td>.6394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental orientation</td>
<td>3.164</td>
<td>.7999</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to estimate the motivation for the four distinct subgroups according to five main motivational factors, a two-way repeated measures analysis was conducted on the statements related to the following categories: ‘Interest in the French class’, ‘Attitudes towards the method’, ‘Attitudes towards the teacher’, ‘Interest in the French language’ and ‘Instrumental orientation’. There was a significant effect of class (F(3,12) = 15.089, p < .05). There was a not
a significant effect of factors (F(4, 16) = 1.996, p=ns). There was a significant interaction between class and factors F(12,48) = 3.863, p< .05. Table 4 shows the descriptives for the four subgroups GL1, AIM1, AIM2 and GL2 according to the different motivational factors. Figure 4 displays the means for the four sub-groups.

Table 4. Descriptive factors – Four classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GL1</th>
<th>AIM1</th>
<th>AIM2</th>
<th>GL2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in the French Class</td>
<td>2.3750</td>
<td>.53033</td>
<td>2.7414</td>
<td>.21949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes towards the method</td>
<td>3.0000</td>
<td>.47136</td>
<td>3.2826</td>
<td>.15373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes towards the teacher</td>
<td>3.5000</td>
<td>1.06066</td>
<td>3.1290</td>
<td>1.28234</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4. Motivational Factors – Four Classes
Proficiency

In order to compare the two instructional methods AIM and GL on the basis of their effects of proficiency, a paired sample t-test was conducted on the proficiency test for the two pairs of classes participating in this study during Year 1 of French instruction. In attempting to provide an answer for this research question, the means of the four written assignments administered throughout year 1 were considered. There was a significant difference in the scores for the AIM group (M=2.136, SD=0.674) and the GL group (M=1.1899, SD=0.554); t(131)=-13.227, p =<0.05. The differences between AIM and GL in terms of motivation are displayed in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Proficiency AIM and GL – Year 1

A repeated measures analysis was used in this study to compare the four distinct classes on the basis of their French written proficiency during Year 1. The means for the four assignments administered during year 1 was taken into account in order to provide an answer to RQ2. Mauchly’s Test of Sphericity indicated that the assumption of sphericity had not been violated, $\chi^2(5) = 10.545, p > .05$. There was a significant difference between each subgroup GL1 (M=1.145, SD=.360), AIM1 (M=2.104, SD=.634), AIM2 (M=2.666, SD .246) and GL2...
Figure 6 shows the differences between each subgroup in terms of proficiency.

![Proficiency Four Classes - Year 1](image)

*Change of motivation and proficiency over time*

In order to estimate the development of the students’ motivation during their first and second year of French instruction, a paired sample t-test was conducted on the data from the two mini-motivational questionnaire administered in November 2013 and January 2015 to all the participants in this study. There was not a significant difference in the motivational scores of the whole sample of participant in November 2013 (M=6.539, SD=1.412) and January 2015 (M=6.414, SD=1.276); t(63)=-.910, p=ns. Figure 6 shows the students’ motivational rate in November 2013 and January 2015. Figure 7 displays the whole sample of learners’ motivation in Year 1 and Year 2.
Two paired sample t-tests were conducted on the data for AIM and GL in November 2013 and January 2015, in order to estimate the motivational development over time of the students instructed with these methods. There was not a significant difference in the motivational scores of the AIM group in November 2013 (M=6.698, SD=1.159) and January 2015 (M=6.585, SD=1.190); t(43)=.693, p=ns. There was not a significant difference in the motivational scores of the GL group in November 2013 (M=6.062, SD=1.850) and January 2015 (M=6.156, SD=1.263); t(15)=.251, p=ns. Figure 8 provides information regarding the differences between the two groups at the two points of time taken into consideration.
In order to verify whether French written proficiency was subject to change over time and to investigate its development, a repeated measure analysis was conducted on the results for the four written assignments administered to the whole sample of students throughout year 1. Mauchly’s Test of Sphericity indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated, $\chi^2(5) = 25.676$, $p < .0005$, therefore, a Greenhouse-Geisser correction was used. There was a significant difference between the overall proficiency rate of the participants at four distinct points in time throughout Year 1, $F(2.473, 200.308) = 27.389$, $p < .0005$. Figure 9 shows the development of French written proficiency over time on the basis of the overall means for each of the four assignments.
A two-way repeated measures analysis was conducted in order to compare the two groups AIM and GL in terms of proficiency development at four distinct points in time during Year 1. There was a significant effect of time \( (F(3, 96) = 17.790, p < .05) \). There was a significant effect of method \( (F(1,32) = 74.726, p < .05) \). There was a significant interaction between method and change over time \( F(3,96) = 19.164, p > .05 \). Students instructed through the AIM method show a higher rate of development over time, as shown in Figure 10 and 11.

Figure 10. Proficiency AIM and GL – Year 1
A two-way repeated measure analysis was conducted in order to estimate the development of the four distinct subgroups over the course of their first year of French instruction. There was a significant effect of time ($F(3, 36) = 20.004, p < .05$). There was a significant effect of class ($F(3,36) = 33.194, p < .05$). There was a significant interaction between class and change over time $F(9,108) = 9.861, p > .05$. Figure 12 show the development over time of the written proficiency for the four distinct classes.
Figure 12. Proficiency Four Classes – Year 1
4. Study 2 - Two AIM groups compared

The previous chapter of this paper compared and examined two different L2 instructional methods and the way they related to learning motivation and proficiency. The results of Study 1 showed significant differences between the two teaching methods, and to a greater extent, between the four classes that participated to this research. The purpose of Study 2 is to determine which factors play a role in defining differences in motivation and proficiency between two classes using the same instructional method and whether change over time takes place.

In order to establish the variables that contribute to a difference in the two AIM classes’ proficiency and motivation, an empirical and a qualitative study will be conducted. The empirical study will be based on the two motivational questionnaires and a series of written assignments, administered over the course of two academic years, as used in Study 1. The qualitative study will be based on classroom observations and a teacher free-response questionnaire, which will attempt to provide an insight into students’ classroom behaviour and teachers’ attitudes and beliefs concerning the instructional method adopted in class and how can it possibly affect students’ motivation and proficiency.

4.1 Research questions

RQ1. What factors account for differences between the two AIM classes in terms of motivation and proficiency?

RQ2. Are motivation and proficiency correlated?

RQ3. Do motivation and proficiency change over time?
4.2 Instructional method

The L2 instructional method object of this study is AIM, previously discussed in Study 1.

4.3 Participants

The participants in this study were 39 students from two AIM classes of ‘Esdal College’ in Emmen, The Netherlands, previously mentioned in Study 1. The 39 students took part in this research project during their first and second year of French instruction; at the beginning of their first academic year (2013-2014) they were on average 11/12 years old. During Year 2 (2014-2015), the students participating in this study were reassigned to two different classes; most of the students kept the same French teacher, while only a few were assigned to a different teacher. The two AIM teachers taking part in this study were the same presented in Study 1 for AIM1 and AIM2. Table 5 below provides an overview of the participants in this study.

Table 5. Participants Study 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AIM 1 – I</th>
<th>AIM 2 – I</th>
<th>AIM 1 - II</th>
<th>AIM 2 - II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF STUDENTS</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4 Materials and procedures

Motivation

In order to determine the amount and quality of motivation of the students from the two AIM classes during their first year of French instruction, Questionnaire 1 (previously introduced in Study 1) was administered to the students in June 2014. Questionnaire 2, aimed at verifying the motivational rate of the two AIM classes during the second year of French instruction, was
drawn on the basis of a factor analysis conducted on Questionnaire 1. The factor analysis, further discussed in the results section of Study 1, was conducted in order to verify the correlations between the items in the Questionnaire 1 and therefore to determine which factors can be deemed as predictors of motivation. The lowest index of correlation was found among the questions belonging to the following categories:

- Parental encouragement
- Motivational intensity
- Integrative orientation

As a result of the factor analysis, the questions related to the above mentioned categories were deleted from the survey. In addition, in order to provide more detailed information regarding students’ attitudes and orientation towards the teaching method and teachers’ motivational strategies, a series of new questions were inserted. Questionnaire 2 presented in total 55 items in the form of statements to which the participants were asked to provide a judgement on a 5 point Likert scale, ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’. The questionnaire was administered in April 2015 through an online survey to the two classes of Esdal College that had adopted the AIM instructional method.

Unlike Questionnaire 1 and 2, aimed at assessing empirically the extent and types of motivation in students, Questionnaire 3 was part of our qualitative study, and its purpose was to provide an insight into teachers’ perceptions of the instructional method and the way it relates to students’ motivation, as well as information regarding the motivational strategies adopted in the classroom. Questionnaire 3 consisted of 14 free-response questions dispensed via email in April 2015 to the two teachers participating in Study 2 (see results Study 2).
Proficiency

In order to evaluate the proficiency rate of the two AIM classes object of this study, a series of written proficiency tests (see Study 1) were administered to the students throughout the two academic years in question. Four written assignments were dispensed over the course of Year 1 and three during Year 2.

Change of motivation and proficiency over time

In order to estimate the change over time of motivation and proficiency in the two AIM classes, Questionnaires 1 and 2 were used in combination with the 7 written assignments administered throughout the two academic years in question.

4.5 Data Processing and analysis

Motivation

In order to compare the motivational rate of the two AIM classes during their first year of French instruction, a paired-sample t-test was conducted on Questionnaire 1.

Questionnaire 2 was drawn on the basis of the results of the factor analysis conducted on the whole sample of Questionnaire 1, and contained the items that presented a high index of correlation (α> 0.5). Questionnaire 2 underwent a reliability analysis to verify its internal consistency. In order to compare the motivational rate of the two AIM classes during Year 2 of French instruction, a paired sample t-test was conducted on the data from Questionnaire 2.

In order to verify whether there was a difference between the two classes AIM1 and AIM2 on the different subcomponents on motivation, a two-way repeated measures analysis was conducted on the data for Questionnaire 1.
**Proficiency**

With the purpose of comparing the proficiency rate of the two AIM classes, a paired sample t-test was conducted on the means for the four written assignments carried out by the two classes in Year 1. Another paired sample t-test was conducted on the data for the two classes during Year 2.

In order to determine the relationship between motivation and proficiency in the students participating in this study, a correlation analysis was conducted.

**Change in motivation and proficiency over time**

In order to verify whether a change in motivation over time took place, a series of paired sample t-tests were conducted on the data of AIM classes for Year 1 and Year 2. Variability in the participants’ proficiency rate was measured by means of a repeated measure analysis, conducted on the 7 written assignments administered throughout two academic years.

**4.6 Results**

**Motivation**

The two AIM classes were compared in terms of motivational rate during Year 1 of French instruction by means of a paired sample t-test conducted on Questionnaire 1. There was a significant difference in the scores for the class AIM 1 (M=2.883, SD=.710) and class AIM 2 (M=3.359, SD=.674); t(65)=-9.625, p =<0.05. Figure 13 depicts the difference between the two classes in terms of motivation during Year 1.
In order to measure the internal consistency of Questionnaire 2 a reliability analysis was conducted, showing an excellent index of internal consistency (α=0.948).

A paired sample t-test was conducted on the data for Year 2 with the purpose of comparing the two AIM classes in terms of motivational rate. There was a significant difference in the scores for the class AIM 1 (M=2.971, SD=.708) and class AIM 2 (M=3.339, SD=.727); t(54)=-7.388, p<0.05. Figure 14 shows the differences between the two AIM classes’ motivation during Year 2.
In order to verify whether the two classes AIM 1 and AIM 2 presented a difference in terms of the different subcomponents of motivation, a two-way repeated measure analysis was conducted. There was a significant effect of class (F(1,4) = 81.246, p=<.05). There was a not a significant effect of factors (F(4, 16) = 2.331, p=ns). There was a significant interaction between class and factors F(4,16) = .5.478, p=<.05. Table 5 shows the descriptives for the two distinct AIM classes on motivational factors. Table 7 shows the descriptives for classes AIM 1 and 2 according to the motivational factors. Figure 15 shows the means for the two AIM classes in terms of motivational factors.
Table 7. Descriptive factors – AIM1 and AIM2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AIM1</th>
<th></th>
<th>AIM2</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in the French Class</td>
<td>2.7414</td>
<td>.21949</td>
<td>2.8158</td>
<td>.26050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes towards the method</td>
<td>3.2826</td>
<td>.15373</td>
<td>3.5834</td>
<td>.27499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes towards the teacher</td>
<td>3.1290</td>
<td>1.28234</td>
<td>3.8947</td>
<td>.96760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in the French language</td>
<td>3.0345</td>
<td>.87780</td>
<td>3.3685</td>
<td>.59545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental orientation</td>
<td>2.6429</td>
<td>1.11122</td>
<td>2.9211</td>
<td>.70711</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 15. AIM 1 and AIM2 – Motivational Factors

Proficiency

A paired sample t-test was conducted on the means for the three assignments dispensed during Year 1 in order to compare the two AIM classes in terms of proficiency. There was a significant difference between class AIM 1 (M=2.119, SD=.563) and class AIM 2 (M=2.554, SD=.310);
t(22)=−3.904, p<0.05. The differences between the two AIM classes in terms of motivation on the first year of instruction are depicted in Figure 16.

Figure 16. Proficiency AIM1 and AIM2 – Year 1

In order to compare the proficiency rate of the two AIM classes that took part in this research project also in the second year of French instruction, a paired sample t-test was conducted on the data from the written assignments administered in Year 2. There was not a significant difference in the proficiency rate between class AIM 1 (M=2.893, SD=.792) and class AIM 2 (M=3.287, SD=.605); t(17)=−1.575, p=ns. Figure 17 displays the proficiency of the two classes AIM1 and AIM2 in Year 2.
In order to determine the relationship between motivation and proficiency in the students participating in this study, a correlation analysis was conducted on the data for Questionnaire 1 related to both AIM classes. A non-significant correlation between motivation and proficiency was found $r(49)=-.210$, $p=ns$.

*Change of motivation and proficiency*

A paired sample t-test was conducted on the data from Questionnaire 1 and 2 in order to verify whether changes in motivation in both classes of AIM students between Year 1 and 2 took place. There was not a significant difference in the motivational scores of AIM students in June 2014 ($M=3.041$, $SD=.738$) and April 2015 ($M=3.155$, $SD=.738$); $t(109)=-1.162$, $p=ns$. Figure 19 shows the overall motivation for both AIM classes in Year 1 and 2.
Two paired sample t-tests were conducted on the two AIM classes on the basis of the data from Questionnaire 1 and 2, in order to verify whether these classes presented changes in terms of motivation. There was not a significant difference in the motivational scores of class AIM1 in June 2014 (M=2.82, SD=.673) and April 2015 (M=2.97, SD=.708); t(54)=-1.087, p=ns. There was not a significant difference in the motivational scores of class AIM 2 in June 2014 (M=3.334, SD=.700) and April 2015 (M=3.339, SD=.727); t(54)=-.038, p=ns. Figure 21 depicts the motivational rate of AIM1 and AIM2 during Year 1 and 2.
With the purpose of verifying whether the proficiency of the AIM classes changed from Year 1 to Year 2, a series of paired sample t-tests were conducted on the means of the written assignments’ scores. There was a significant difference in the proficiency scores of class both classes in Year 1 (M=2.343, SD=.520) and Year 2 (M=3.214, SD=.750); t(39)=--6.433, p<0.05, as shown in Figure 22 below.
There was a significant difference in the proficiency scores of class AIM 1 in Year 1 (M=2.144, SD=.614) and Year 2 (M=3.083, SD=.912); t(18)=-3.759, p<0.05. There was a significant difference in the proficiency scores of class AIM 2 in Year 1 (M=2.473, SD=.299) and Year 2 (M=3.386, SD=.555); t(18)=-6.418, p<0.05. Figure 23 below shows the difference between the two classes in Year 1 and 2 of French instruction.

Figure 23. Proficiency AIM1 and AIM2 – Year 1 and Year 2.

A repeated measure analysis was conducted in order to estimate the development of the two AIM classes over the course of their first and second year of French instruction at four different points over time. There was a significant effect of time, F(6, 18) = 5.714, p<.05. There was not a significant effect of class, F(1,3) =.003, p=ns. There was not a significant interaction between class and change over time, F(6,18) = 1.651, p=ns. Figure 24 shows the development over time of the written proficiency for the two AIM classes throughout the two years of instruction.
Qualitative study

Table 8 displays the results for Questionnaire 3, administered to the two AIM teachers involved in this study.
Table 8. Qualitative Study – Results Questionnaire 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Teacher 1 – AIM1</th>
<th>Teacher 2 – AIM2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To what extent do you think the teaching method plays a role in order to improve students’ motivation and proficiency?</td>
<td>Results and motivation work together. The method is important.</td>
<td>In all classes, it is very important according to me, but I notice a difference in motivation on grade 1 and 2. In grade 1 all is new, while in grade two they already know how it goes. In addition, puberty comes up and then I noticed that the method does not matter as much, the students are just doing other things and have trouble doing the things one expects from them. I think there will be less play in vwo2 classes, since they want to perform higher in the grammar and focusing more on it. I do notice that using AIM since year 1 provides a good base for students, they progress more easily and have a better motivation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Do you believe that students’ proficiency and motivation rely more on the teaching method or on the teacher?  
Both.  
You cannot consider one without the other. Both are equally important.

3. What does motivate your students to learn French?  
They are motivated by using French in class and by the awareness of the usefulness of French in general and for a future job (career prospects).  
They are doing great conversations and good results if they have then they have more motivation. Positive feedback.

4. Do you make use of motivational strategies? What are the most engaging activities for your students?  
I rely on engaging activities. I create them myself but I always let room for input from the students. This makes them feel involved and they are very creative. In the first year and at the beginning of the second, I reward them with cards (AIM rewarding system). It motivates them to have other activity besides the ones proposed by the AIM method and to see that they are able to make tests from other traditional methods. I also repeat very often why it is important to learn how we learn.  
Yes, I give them cards (AIM rewarding system) when they are actively involved in the lesson and when they do their best.

5. Why did you choose this teaching method?  
I was disappointed by the results in production and motivation of my students with the other  
Because I think that in other methods the minimum level of French that is learnt is lower in
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>methods, particularly in terms of oral production.</td>
<td>comparison to AIM. I think that some students do not choose it because they find it too difficult. Personally, I think a regular method would be boring. AIM fits well with my way of working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Do you make use of positive feedback or rewards to motivate your students?</td>
<td>See question 4. I give them treats or extra points for the exam. Yes, by means of positive comments, and I also give them cards I used to increment their SO number.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. What are your considerations in terms of parental encouragement?</td>
<td>It can play a role especially for students that are not motivated (negative effect). But normally it does not really play a role, particularly for students with a high aptitude. I find it less positive because it's new, it's scary. Parents can help their children less. Parents worry about the level of AIM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How do you face individual differences in terms of motivation in your students?</td>
<td>Differentiation is difficult in the first year. I give extra exercises, I put them in groups. Sometimes from the same level, sometimes I mix the levels. The idea is that students are actively involved, not whether it is always perfectly what they say.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. How do you encourage your students' autonomy?</td>
<td>I encourage autonomy when they work in groups, but I don’t really let them work alone. I try to encourage in everyone his / her value. I do expect them to contribute to the class and I want to hear no NL. That's tricky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Have you ever noticed cases of language anxiety in your class?</td>
<td>First year: anxiety for speaking, but it is fast not an issue anymore. It differs per student, but in general it goes well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. To what extent do you consider students’ engagement important in order to learn?</td>
<td>Important but it does not happen in every group. Motivation and engagement go together. Variation in activities is very important. Also that they can present their own input.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. What is more important between grammar and communicative competences?</td>
<td>It changes over time. First communicative competences are important, the grammar comes later. I have very few questions from my students about the grammar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Do you think motivation can change over time?</td>
<td>Yes. First class begins always very motivated but some people don’t pay attention from day 1. In the second class, motivation is more of an issue, they need variety, external input.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Which communicative strategies are required from a teacher in order for the students to feel at ease when speaking?</td>
<td>Teachers should know their students well but also provide order in the classroom. Mistakes are not that important, have fun in the classroom is. They need to know that it is okay to make mistakes, it's just useful to make mistakes, you can learn it properly. They should certainly not be punished at the beginning for their mistakes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Discussion

The purpose of the present paper was twofold: to investigate and compare the effects of different teaching methods on L2 learning motivation and proficiency under a diachronic perspective, and to determine the factors that account for a difference between classes instructed with the same teaching method. In order to provide an answer to our research questions, two studies were conducted on a group of French learners from a Dutch secondary school. Study 1 investigated the relationship between teaching method, learning motivation and proficiency by means of an empirical study conducted on four classes instructed with two teaching methods, one of them grounded on focus-on-form principles, and the other one focus-on-meaning based. Study 2 intended to examine in depth the two classes in which the focus-on-meaning method was adopted through an empirical and qualitative research, in order to identify the determinants that justify a difference in their proficiency and motivation rate.

Study 1

A factor analysis was conducted on the data from Questionnaire 1 aimed at determining the patterns of correlation between the statements of the questionnaire, and therefore at identifying the factors that can be deemed as predictor of L2 learning motivation. Four factors were established by the factor analysis, as shown in the table below.
Table 9. Motivational Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTOR 1</th>
<th>FACTOR 2</th>
<th>FACTOR 3</th>
<th>FACTOR 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Interest in French class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Attitude towards the teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Attitude towards the teaching method</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Interest in learning French</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Instrumental orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Parental encouragement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Integrative orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Interest in foreign languages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Motivational Intensity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the analysis presented a series of factors with a low index of correlation, which could not be considered as strong predictors of motivation: parental encouragement, motivational intensity and integrative orientation. These findings are not in line with previous research; in fact, the three of them were considered as important motivational factors by both Gardner (1985) and Convington and Omelich (1979). These three factors were part of Gardner’s AMTB (1985), aimed at quantifying L2 learning motivation; according to the Canadian researcher, their consideration cannot be omitted in the analysis of the variables that account for motivation in L2 learners. In his motivational studies, Gardner (1985) focused in particular on integrative orientation, related to the desire of learning a language with the purpose of becoming part of a given linguistic and cultural community. Although the particular linguistic situation of Canada suggests that a link between integrative orientation and motivation to learn a language may be strong in that geographic area, this is not the case for the students participating in this study, coming from the north of the Netherlands and therefore not proximate to the French language and culture.
As for parental encouragement, Convington and Omelich (1979) advocate, within a cognitive psychology framework, that parents and teachers can influence learners’ self-efficacy beliefs, in the way that they can direct them towards the adoption of determinate learning goals. Zimmerman et al. (1992), on the other hand, showed that learners do not always approbate externally imposed goals, since their motivation is primarily affected by their self-motivating orientation. Although this consideration may be applied to parents’ encouragement motivational factor in our study, this is not the case for teachers. In fact, the high correlation between the factors ‘attitude towards the teacher’, ‘attitude towards the method’ and ‘interest in the French class’ shows that teachers play an active role in shaping the students’ motivational identity. In addition, the factor analysis revealed that the interest in the French class cannot be examined without reference to the teacher and the teaching method adopted in the classroom, since these three factors appeared to be strongly correlated. Another strong predictor of motivation is Factor 2, composed by ‘Interest in learning French’ and ‘Instrumental orientation’. Interestingly, these two factors, that account for respectively intrinsic and extrinsic type of motivation, seem to be highly related, showing that the combination of the two plays a role in determining the general motivation to learn an L2.

The results of the paired-sample t-test conducted on the motivational data for the two methods show that the GL classes scored higher in motivation than the AIM classes. However, the repeated measure analysis conducted on the results for the four distinct classes showed a significant difference in the motivation rate for each of them. While one of the AIM classes (AIM2) scored the highest, the other one (AIM 1) scored the lowest; a small but significant difference was also found between the two GL classes. This difference shows that other than a series of determinants need to be acknowledged and investigated in order to find out what makes students motivated, to what extent and under which conditions.
In order to verify whether the two groups AIM and GL presented a difference in terms of the five main motivational factors emerged by the factor analysis, a two-way repeated measure analysis was conducted, showing that no significant difference was found between the two methods on the different subcomponents on motivation. However, the repeated measure analysis conducted on the four distinct classes revealed a significant interaction between classes and factors, showing that each of the four subgroups scored differently on the several subcomponents of motivation. It is possible to notice that class AIM1 scored the lowest in terms on ‘Interest in the French class’, while in the case of the three other classes (AIM2, GL1 and GL2) a small amount of difference was found. This finding is not in line with research conducted by Ibarran et al. (2007), who claimed that students generally prefer classroom activities such as the ones related to focus on meaning teaching approaches. According to our results, in fact, the teaching method adopted in the L2 classroom did not significantly affect the interest in the L2 class. Similarly, for the factor ‘Attitudes towards the method’, the classes which scored the highest were AIM2 and GL2, instructed with different method by the same teacher. It is possible to suggest, therefore, that the teacher in question was capable to motivate her students towards the appreciation of the method, regardless of the method itself. An interesting finding emerged from the examination of the factor ‘Attitudes towards the teacher’; class AIM2 showed higher appreciation of the teacher than class GL2, although they were instructed by the same teacher. This may be due to group dynamics in the classroom, as well as to the enthusiasm shown by the teacher in the different classes or to the different reward system employed, that may have had an effect on students’ perception of the teacher (see discussion Study 2). Another finding highlighted by the analysis of the single factors is related to the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, on which Deci & Ryan’s attribution theory was grounded (1985). GL2 students scored the highest in terms of statements related to the interest in the French language, followed by AIM2; this suggest that the teacher may have
played a role also in determining students’ intrinsic motivation, related to the satisfaction driven by learning itself (Deci & Ryan, 1985). This finding is in line with research conducted by Noels, Clément and Pellettier (1999), which proved that teachers’ communicative style has an effect in shaping students’ intrinsic motivation. As for instrumental orientation, grounded on the desire to learn in order to obtain an external outcome and therefore related to an extrinsic type of motivation, it is possible to observe that the students of the four classes did not present an opposite pattern with the respect to intrinsic motivation, showing that these two learning orientations do not necessarily compete, but they are part of a continuum (Ryan & Deci, 1985).

The second research question of this study pertained to the relationship between teaching method and motivation, as well as motivation and proficiency. According to the results of the present study, a significant difference was found between GL and AIM students, who scored higher in terms of written proficiency. In fact, AIM students produced more complex sentences and showed a more varied vocabulary in the free response written assignments they were administered. This finding contrasts with a study conducted by Mady, Arnott and Lapkin (2009), aimed at comparing the overall proficiency skills of two groups of Grade 3 students, instructed respectively by means of AIM and a regular core French program, tested by means of test-package for proficiency (Harley, Lapkin, Scane, Hart & Trépanier, 1988) and a questionnaire based on students’ perception of the French class; non-significant differences were found between the two groups in terms of their language skills and their orientations towards the French class. Other studies, however, such as the ones carried out by Beretta & Davis (1985) and White (1998), proved that implicit focus-on-meaning teaching methods are more effective than explicit focus-on-form ones with regards to language proficiency. Our results are also in line with Prahbu (1987) and Long (1996), who claimed that in order for effective language acquisition to take place learners need to be engaged in authentic communicative tasks, such as the ones on which the AIM teaching approach is based.
However, as highlighted by Rousse-Malpat (2011), whose findings were similar to those in this study, the way proficiency is measured has a considerable effect on the results; this justifies the discrepancies in the literature dedicated to the effectiveness of different instructional methods in raising students’ linguistic competences. It is also interesting to highlight the significant difference between the four classes shown by the repeated measure analysis. Although both AIM classes outperformed the GL ones, AIM2 scored significantly better; in the case of GL classes, on the other hand, less disparity was found in the means for proficiency. Study 2 will attempt to investigate the factors that may account for such difference between the two AIM classes, in order to find out whether other variables may be involved in addition to the instructional method.

The third research question of this study aimed at determining whether a change over time in the students’ motivation and proficiency took place. The analysis of the overall means for the motivation data collected in November 2013 and January 2015 does not show a significant difference, leading to the presumption that the learners’ motivational orientations were not subject to variability at a diachronic level. This result contrasts with a series of process-oriented and DST motivational theories, that deem motivation as an ever-changing construct (Ottò and Dörnyei, 1998; Dörnyei et al., 2015; Henry, 2015), and studies aimed at verifying the changes in motivation over time, such as the one conducted by Waninge et al. (2014). One of the arguments that may explain the discrepancy between our findings and previous motivational literature is related to the timescales in which motivation was measured. In fact, Waninge et al. (2014), for instance, measured motivation on 5 minutes intervals over the course of a 45-50 minutes class. Therefore, their findings relate more with the general level of classroom engagement than motivation with all its subcomponents. The timescales on which motivation is measured, therefore, interfere in the examination of its variability on a diachronic dimension, as well as the different factors that are deemed to determine motivation.
Another reason that accounts for motivational stability in our participants might be associated with a strong L2 self-perception. It is possible to assume, in fact, that the students in question, absolute beginners of French, built during their first year of French instruction a solid motivational identity, which they also kept steady during their second academic year. In Dörnyei’s terms (2009), the L2 ideal and ought-to self of the French learners in question might have been rapidly established at the beginning of the first year; their initial opinion regarding the instructional method, the teacher, and the subject in general formed the basis for their motivational identity, whose rate does not seem to have been subject to change over time. This implies that students’ first perception of the factors on which their learning motivation is grounded is significantly decisive in terms of L2 self-identity shaping, and it is resistant to variation over time. If students perceive positively from the beginning the factors responsible for initiating their motivation, this is likely to remain constant even though, for instance, the teacher may disappoint them on an exceptional basis (Verspoor, 2015). On the other hand, if this perception is sensed negatively from the beginning, in order for this attitude to change a significant amount of effort is required by the teacher. The two groups AIM and GL were also compared in order to find out whether motivation develops in different ways on the basis of the teaching method adopted in the classroom. No significant difference was found in this respect, showing that the method alone is not responsible for possible changes of motivation on a diachronic scale.

Although motivation, according to the results of the present research, appears as a relatively stable construct, this is not the case for proficiency. In fact, the examination of the proficiency rate of the participants in this study at four points in time shows a significant difference both at a classroom level and according to the instructional method employed. This can be explained in terms of a DST perspective; in fact, the interacting variables underlying language proficiency are subject to continuous variation over time, within and between subjects. This variability
results in a nonlinear development; it is possible to notice, in fact, that the four classes in question did not develop in the same way and according to the same patterns. While the two AIM classes show a positive development over the course of the first year of French instruction, the two GL classes behaved differently; GL1, after a slow increase, dropped by the end of first year while GL2 scored overall better in the last written assignment after a series of rises and falls. It is possible to infer, therefore, that while changes in proficiency do not seem to be affected by the teaching method adopted in the classroom, development in proficiency appears to be significantly different in the case of the AIM and GL groups. AIM students, although they do not show the same motivational pattern, perform progressively better over the course of one year time, while GL students do not seem to increase their French proficiency. This finding is in line with Rousse-Malpat (2011), who highlighted that not only AIM students outperformed students instructed through focus-on-form method in terms of proficiency, but also tend to develop more positively over time than their counterparts.

Study 2

As demonstrated in Study 1, although the instructional approach appears to have an influence on both a series of motivational factors and proficiency, a number of differences can be identified between classes of students instructed with the same method. The purpose of Study 2 was to determine to which variables these differences can be attributed, by means of a quantitative and qualitative analysis conducted over the course of two academic years on two classes taught French through the focus-on-meaning based teaching method AIM.

During the first year of French instruction, the two AIM classes presented a significant difference in terms of motivation. The factor analysis aimed at determining whether there was a difference between the two AIM classes in terms of motivational sub-component was significant as well. The first determinant of this difference can be attributed to the role played
by the teacher in shaping students’ motivation. As seen in Study 1, in fact, the classes that scored the highest in motivation (AIM 2 and GL2) were instructed by the same teacher, whereas the other two classes, instructed with both AIM and GL, presented a lower rate of motivation. It is important to acknowledge that in the case of AIM method the role played by the teacher is of fundamental importance. This method, in fact, is based on a series of learning activities such as drama plays and storytelling in which students, that constantly and actively take part in the class, are coordinated at all times by the teacher, who provides the linguistic input in the first place and has to make sure that they receive enough exposure and repetition in order to successfully process and memorise it. While focus-on-form methods such as GL do not rely as much on the teacher in order to maximise the learning impact of the method, since they are mainly based on the adoption of a textbook that serves as main source of linguistic input, AIM classes are much more teacher-centred (Arnott, 2011). The way the teacher uses the method, therefore, can make a significant difference in both students’ motivation and learning outcome, since he or she is responsible for its successful or unsuccessful implementation, as it is also possible to notice by the difference between the two classes in terms of ‘Attitudes towards the method’. The role of the teacher in motivational literature has been extensively recognised and investigated; according to Noels, Clément and Pellettier (1999), for instance, the communicative approaches and techniques adopted by teacher play an essential role in shaping students’ quantity and quality of motivation. Covington (2000) and Locke and Latham (1990) also granted great emphasis to the teacher’s role in terms of directing students’ goals and beliefs towards learning. The teacher, in fact, has the ability to shape the students’ self-identity by means of a series of motivational strategies (Dörnyei & Czisér, 1998). The analysis of the different factors that account for motivation showed a significant difference between AIM1 and AIM2 in terms of the appreciation of the teacher. According to Questionnaire 3 administered to the teachers participating in this study, the teacher of class AIM2, who scored better in
motivation and according to Questionnaire 1 was more appreciated by her students than the teacher of AIM 1, tended to use both positive feedback and rewards in order to foster students’ eagerness to learn (Questions 3; 4). In addition, the teacher in question pointed out the need for students to use French autonomously in communicative tasks the linguistic resources and input provided implicitly (Question 12). The function of positive feedback and sense of autonomy as motivational factors has been largely recognised by cognitive psychology (Noels, Clément & Pellettier, 1999; Deci & Ryan, 1985). According to the teacher of class AIM1, who scored lower in terms of overall motivation, what motivated her students the most were, other than the possibility to practice their spoken French, the career possibilities offered by the knowledge of French. As for the motivational strategies, this teacher listed the use of engaging activities, as well as rewards and good grades (Question 6). However, she noticed in the classroom general language anxiety in speaking tasks, which did not seem the case for the other AIM class.

As for L2 proficiency, AIM2 outperformed AIM1 during both the first and second year of French instruction. This difference in the proficiency scores seems to be due to the teacher of AIM2 and the way she implemented the teaching method, maximising its effectiveness both in terms of students’ motivation and learning outcome. The enthusiasm of both teachers and students regarding the teaching method and its perceived effectiveness on language learning may have also played a role in determining these results; both teachers, according to Questionnaire 1, appeared enthusiastic about AIM, and considered traditional teaching methods not only monotonous but also less effective (Question 5). The case of AIM1 appears different; although during the first year AIM1 showed high proficiency, the level of motivation appeared rather low, as shown by the correlation analysis. A possible explanation may be related to the fact that although AIM 1 students performed well and showed a good level of linguistic competence, they were generally less interested in the subject itself and did not show as much appreciation of the teachers as in the case of AIM2, as emerges by the analysis of the different
motivational factors. Another element to take into consideration, which has already been mentioned in the case of motivation, is that AIM1 students did not seem to appreciate the teaching method as much as the other class, which may have resulted in low motivation, yet without any effect on proficiency. However, towards the end of Year 2 no significant difference was found in terms of proficiency between the two classes; this improvement of class AIM1 may be due to the fact that students in Year 2 felt more comfortable when asked to speak and their confidence in both oral and writing skills was increasingly boosted by good grades (Questions 3;10).

The motivation and proficiency of the two AIM classes were subject to examination over the course of two academic years, in order to verify whether changes on a diachronic scale took place. There was not a significant difference in the motivation rate of the AIM students between their first and second year of French instruction; the two distinct classes, similarly, do not show any extent of variation between Year 1 and 2. As previously argued in the discussion concerning Study 1, this lack of variability over time may be due to a strong motivational identity acquired by the students in question after the first academic year, renitent to alteration over the course of time. Questionnaire 1 was administrated to students during the summer holidays following the first academic year; it is possible to suggest, therefore, that both classes of AIM students developed after the first year of French instruction a series of firm orientations towards the French class, the teacher, the method and the subject in general, which consists in the main motivational factors highlighted by the factor analysis conducted in Study 1. These results appear in line with Verspoor (2015), who showed that variability over time is related to the initial conditions in which learning takes place and therefore to the developmental stage in which motivation is measured; once the learners’ motivational system is settled, it may not be subject to a vast amount of change.
As for changes over time in proficiency, according to the results of Study 2 the two AIM classes obtained generally higher grades in Year 2 of French, showing a positive development on a diachronic scale. However, the repeated measure analysis, as well as the examination of the means for the seven assignments administered throughout the two academic years show that this development was not linear, and did not affect the two classes according to the same patterns. While AIM1 shows a steep development for the first five assignments, followed by a slight decrease, class AIM2 did not present a sharp increase until assignment 5, ensued by a period of relative stability. Although the developmental patterns of the two classes differs, it is possible to notice that during their second year they were both subject to relative levelling. The reason behind this, as explained by DST principles, may be the fact that the learners’ linguistic system, subject to developmental changes, went through a period of stabilisation due to the self-organising properties of the system itself. As in the case of motivation in fact, it is unlikely for a great extent of variability to take place once an attractor stage has been reached (Verspoor, 2015).
6. Conclusion

The motivational research conducted throughout the past decades has shown the relevance of this construct in terms of L2 acquisition and development. Although large attention has been dedicated in the L2 acquisition field to the interconnectedness of learning motivation and language proficiency, only few studies focused on the role played by the instructional method in shaping students’ motivational identity and behaviour. The purpose of this research was twofold: to examine the extent to which the instructional method affects L2 learning motivation, and to determine the factors accounting for a difference in motivation and proficiency in classes adopting the same method, under a diachronic perspective. In order to provide an answer to our research questions, empirical and qualitative analyses based on questionnaires and interviews were conducted on four classes of beginner learners of French from a Dutch high-school, instructed with AIM and Grandes Lignes, two teaching methods grounded respectively on focus-on-meaning and focus-on-form principles.

The results of Study 1, aimed at comparing the quality and extent of motivation and proficiency between the two classes, as well as their development over time, showed that the two GL classes were slightly more motivated during their first year of French instruction than the AIM ones. However, the investigation conducted on the four distinct classes participating in this study, both on the general amount of motivation and according to different motivational factors, demonstrated a significant difference in the motivational rate and quality of each of them, proving the interaction of a series of factors at the basis of this contrast. According to the results of our research, in fact, the method alone does not account for a disparity in the quality of motivation in the four different classes taken into consideration; however, the way the teacher implements the method has a significant impact in terms of motivating students and shaping their attitudes and orientations towards language learning.
The instructional approach, on the other hand, seems to be correlated with proficiency; the two AIM classes, in fact, scored significantly better than their GL counterparts, proving the effectiveness of this focus-on-meaning based teaching method.

As for changes in motivation and proficiency over time, contrasting results were revealed from our analyses; while motivation, measured after the first year of French instruction and towards the end of the second one, emerged as a relatively stable construct, proficiency appeared affected by developmental variability at different points in time during the first academic year. It is possible to assume, therefore, that the learners’ perception of the teacher, teaching method and French class acquired towards the end of the first academic year created solid basis for their motivational self-identity.

Study 2 aimed at investigating the variables that accounted for a difference in motivation and proficiency between the two AIM classes. In the case of both AIM classes the factors underlying this contrast seemed interrelated, since the most motivated class was also the more proficient. The empirical and qualitative analysis conducted on the two AIM classes showed that at the basis of this discrepancy there was the perceived effectiveness of the teaching approach and, to a higher extent, the role played by the teacher, who was responsible for the successful or unsuccessful implementation of the method and for fostering students’ motivation by means of motivational strategies. As for change over time, no differences were found between Year 1 and 2 in motivation, while the learners subject of this study presented developmental variability in proficiency followed by a period of stability during year 2, due to the settlement of their language acquisition system.

The investigation of the relationship between instructional method, motivation and proficiency conducted in the present paper led to a series of final conclusions. In the first place, it is necessary to acknowledge that there is no univocal type of motivation. In order to determine
the extent and quality of motivation in learners, the consideration of all the factors that account for a motivated behaviour and identity cannot be omitted; these factors, furthermore, vary both at a classroom and individual level. As suggested by the results of the present study, the teaching method by itself does not play a role in directing students’ beliefs and attitudes towards language learning, and contributing to shape students’ L2 motivational self; the combination of the method with a specific teacher, however, seems to be the main factor accounting for differences in motivation and proficiency in our participants. The teacher, in fact, is accountable for maximising or minimising the effectiveness of the method, and is responsible for influencing learning attitudes and orientations by means of a series of motivational strategies and communicative styles.

A series of limitation need to be acknowledged in this study. In the first place, the subjects in this study were tested in both motivation and proficiency during their first and second year of secondary school, when the choice of a second language was compulsory in their curriculum. Further research may focus on the following years of L2 instruction, in order to verify whether changes in motivation and proficiency take place also in intermediate learners and whether the method still makes a difference in older students. It is necessary to acknowledge that the subjects in this study came from a school situated in the north of the Netherlands, and did not receive exposure to the French language outside the classroom; therefore, our results are not generalizable beyond this determinate context. More research is needed to verify whether the motivational factors identified in the present study may also predict motivation in other geographic context, or on the other hand, variables such as integrative orientation, deemed as irrelevant to our research, may play a role in case of proximity or exposure to the French language and culture. Finally, our study compared two specific teaching methods; further research may be conducted to determine whether other types of teaching approach affect motivation and proficiency and to what extent.
7. References


8. Appendices

Appendix 1. Questionnaire 1.

1. I wish I could speak many languages

2. I don’t pay attention to the feedback during French classes.

3. I am not worried when I have to ask questions in French.

4. I am looking forward to French classes because my teacher is so good.

5. I love learning French

6. It is important to learn French because it makes it easier to speak with French-speaking people.

7. I want to know everything in French

8. French class is a waste of time

9. I do my best to understand the French that I hear and see

10. My French teacher is not good according to me.

11. Learning French is important because I might need it in my career.

12. I don’t have a lot of self-confidence when I speak French in class

13. To be able to speak in French is not a major goal in my life

14. I wish I had more hours of French classes and less of others.

15. My parents think it is important to learn French.

16. I do not look at the assignments when I get them back from my teacher.
17. My French teacher is better than the other teachers.

18. If the decision was up to me, I would spend all my time learning French.

19. French is boring

20. Foreign languages are not interesting.

21. I keep my French sharp by practicing everyday.

22. The less I see my teacher the better it is.

23. Learning French is important, because it means that I have a better degree.

24. I would like to spend my time on other classes rather than the French ones.

25. What we do in French class is much nicer than in the other classes

26. I would like to learn many foreign languages.

27. My parents think I should keep learning French.

28. I postpone my homework for French as much as possible

29. My French teacher teaches in an interesting and varied way.

30. French is an important part of my curriculum.

31. My parents told me how important is to know French after school.

32. Learning French is important to understand and appreciate the French culture.

33. To be honest, I don’t think French is interesting

34. It is not important to learn foreign languages.

35. When I don’t understand something, I ask my French teacher for help.
36. I worry that the other students in my class seem to talk better French than me.

37. I like so much my French class that I look forward to learn more.

38. My parents are interested in what I do during my French class.

39. I would like to learn as much French as possible.

40. To be honest, I don’t like French class.

41. I would not feel comfortable speaking in French outside the classroom.

42. I work hard to learn French.

43. I would like to have another French teacher.

44. Learning French is important because others would respect me.

45. I don’t want to learn French at all.

46. Learning French is stupid.

47. I don’t mind using French.

48. I feel confident when I am asked to speak French in the classroom.

49. I am looking forward to the French class.

50. My parents encourage me to practice French.

51. I really like my French teacher.

52. I wish I could speak French fluently.

53. It is difficult to think about something positive to say about French.

54. I feel nervous when somebody asks me something in French.
55. The way my teacher uses his material is not very special.

56. Sometimes I am scared that the other students would laugh at me if I speak French.

57. As sooner as I can, I will stop learning French.

58. French is one of my favorite classes.

59. My parents think that the method used in this class is good.

60. I think that it is important to get good grades.

61. The method we use is really fun.

62. Because of the method I want to learn French.

63. I think that you could learn good French with this method.

64. Because of this method I will never be able to speak good French.

65. Because of the method I do not like French anymore.

66. I want better a good method to learn French rather than a good teacher.
Appendix 2. Questionnaire 2

1. I would like to speak many languages
2. I am looking forward to the next French class because of my teacher
3. I like learning French.
4. I would like to learn French as much as possible
5. French class is a waste of my time
6. I don’t like my French teacher
7. I think I will need French to get a job
8. I don’t feel confident speaking French in class
9. I don’t think I will need French after high school
10. I would like to have more hours of French class rather than other subjects
11. I prefer my French teacher better than the other teachers
12. I don’t mind spending my time learning French
13. Learning French is boring
14. I am not interested in foreign languages
15. I would prefer to see my French teacher as less as possible
16. I would prefer to spend less time in the French class and more in the other classes
17. French class is more fun than the other classes
18. I am interested in learning many foreign languages
19. My teacher makes the classes fun and interesting

20. French is important in my curriculum

21. Knowing French will be important after finishing high school

22. I don’t think French is an interesting language

23. Learning foreign languages is not important

24. I think I am not as good as the other students when it comes to speaking French

25. My French class is so interesting that I am very motivated to learn more.

26. I would like to master French as much as possible

27. I am not interested in the French class

28. Speaking in French outside the classroom would make me nervous.

29. I would prefer another French teacher.

30. Knowing French would make me respect by others.

31. I am not interested in knowing French

32. Learning French is pointless to me

33. I like speaking in French

34. I don’t mind using French in class

35. I am always looking forward to the next French class

36. My French teacher is great.

37. I don’t have anything positive to say about French
38. I don’t like the way my French teacher uses his/her material

39. I feel nervous to speak French with my classmates

40. After high school I will definitely stop learning French

41. French is my favorite class

42. The method we use in class is effective, according to me

43. I would like to get good grades in my French class

44. The method used in class is fun and engaging

45. This method makes me want to learn French even more

46. This method is very useful to learn spoken and written French

47. This method is not effective at all to learn French

48. This method makes me want to stop learning French

49. The activities carried out in class are fun and varied.

50. Motivation is extremely important in order to learn a new language.

51. My French teacher tries to motivate the students at all time with positive feedback.

52. I am always rewarded by my teacher when I do a good job.

53. The activities we do in class make learning French boring.

54. I do not think that motivation plays an important role in determining my school results.

55. If I had another teacher, my results would not change much.
Appendix 3. Factor analysis – Questionnaire 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I wish I could speak many languages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I don’t pay attention to the feedback during French classes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.415</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I am not worried when I have to ask questions in French.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am looking forward to French classes because my teacher is so good.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.706</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I love learning French</td>
<td></td>
<td>.521</td>
<td>.485</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. It is important to learn French because it makes it easier to speak with French-speaking people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.495</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I want to know everything in French</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.593</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. French class is a waste of time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.567</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I do my best to understand the French that I hear and see</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. My French teacher is not good according to me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.763</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Learning French is important because I might need it in my career.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.632</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I don’t have a lot of self-confidence when I speak French in class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. To be able to speak in French is not a major goal in my life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I wish I had more hours of French classes and less of others.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.492</td>
<td>.507</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. My parents think it is important to learn French.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.475</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I do not look at the assignments when I get them back from my teacher.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. My French teacher is better than the other teachers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.627</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. If the decision was up to me, I would spend all my time learning French.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.579</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. French is boring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.648</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Foreign languages are not interesting.</td>
<td>.619</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>I keep my French sharp by practicing every day.</td>
<td>.450</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>The less I see my teacher the better it is.</td>
<td>.732</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Learning French is important, because it means that I have a better degree.</td>
<td>.498</td>
<td>.413</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>I would like to spend my time on other classes rather than the French ones.</td>
<td>.597</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>What we do in French class is much nicer than in the other classes</td>
<td>.678</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>I would like to learn many foreign languages.</td>
<td>.612</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>My parents think I should keep learning French.</td>
<td>.498</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>I postpone my homework for French as much as possible</td>
<td>.491</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>My French teacher teaches in an interesting and varied way.</td>
<td>.559</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>French is an important part of my curriculum.</td>
<td>.522</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>My parents told me how important is to know French after school.</td>
<td>.606</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>Learning French is important to understand and appreciate the French culture.</td>
<td>.552</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>To be honest, I don’t think French is interesting</td>
<td>.668</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>It is not important to learn foreign languages.</td>
<td>.528</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>When I don’t understand something, I ask my French teacher for help.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>I worry that the other students in my class seem to talk better French than me.</td>
<td>.744</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>I like so much my French class that I look forward to learn more.</td>
<td>.531</td>
<td>.518</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>My parents are interested in what I do during my French class.</td>
<td>.434</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>I would like to learn as much French as possible.</td>
<td>.432</td>
<td>.637</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>To be honest, I don’t like French class.</td>
<td>.692</td>
<td>.416</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. I would not feel comfortable speaking in French outside the classroom.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.527</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. I work hard to learn French.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.496</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. I would like to have another French teacher.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.838</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. Learning French is important because others would respect me.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.533</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. I don’t want to learn French at all.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.582</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. Learning French is stupid.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.648</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. I don’t mind using French.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.521</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. I feel confident when I am asked to speak French in the classroom.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.725</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. I am looking forward to the French class.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.642 .463</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. My parents encourage me to practice French.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.567</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. I really like my French teacher.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.790</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. I wish I could speak French fluently.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.407</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. It is difficult to think about something positive to say about French.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.751</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54. I feel nervous when somebody asks me something in French.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55. The way my teacher uses his material is not very special.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.649</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56. Sometimes I am scared that the other students would laugh at me if I speak French.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.665</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57. As sooner as I can, I will stop learning French.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.555 .412</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58. French is one of my favorite classes.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.639 .469</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59. My parents think that the method used in this class is good.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.626</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60. I think that it is important to get good grades.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.632</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61. The method we use is really fun.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.703</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62. Because of the method I want to learn French.</td>
<td>.570</td>
<td>.552</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63. I think that you could learn good French with this method.</td>
<td>.668</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64. Because of this method I will never be able to speak good French.</td>
<td>.541</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65. Because of the method I do not like French anymore.</td>
<td>.720</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66. I want better a good method to learn French rather than a good teacher.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>