# Language Futures Pilot Study Research Report September 2016


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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 What is Language Futures?

Language Futures is an approach to language learning that was initially developed in 2009 by Linton Village College in Cambridgeshire as part of the Learning Futures initiative led by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, in partnership with the Innovation Unit. Learning Futures itself drew significantly on the Foundation's prior Musical Futures initiative which has transformed music teaching in hundreds of schools across the UK and internationally.

The core purpose of Learning Futures is to generate deep engagement with learning, such that learners are motivated not solely by outcomes but also by the learning process, that they take responsibility for their learning both within and beyond the classroom, voluntarily extending it outside school.

Within Learning Futures four key concepts were developed that form the basis of the approach, as displayed in Figure 1 and described briefly below:

- **Project-based learning** for students of all abilities that crosses disciplinary boundaries
- **School as basecamp** for learning rather than as a final destination
- **Extended learning relationships** that support each student so that learning is something that can happen at any time, in any place and with many people – not just in a classroom
- **School as learning commons** for which teachers, students and the local community share responsibility, and from which they all benefit.

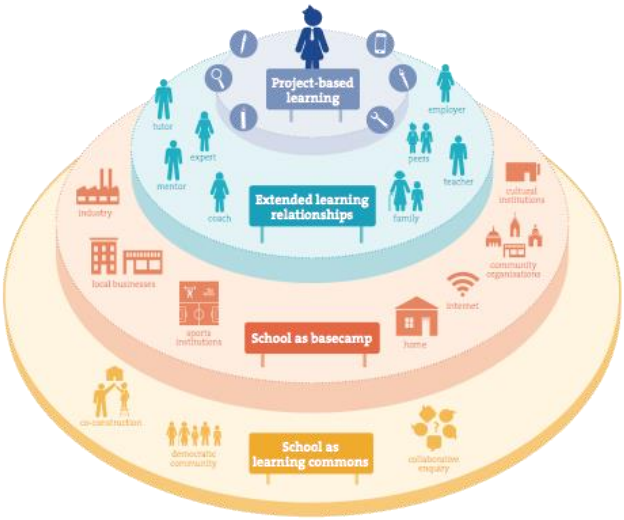


**Figure 1: Learning Futures Conceptual Model**

## 1.2 Language Futures conceptual framework

Building on its origins within Learning Futures, Language Futures (LF) envisions the optimum motivational blend for language learning of learner autonomy and collaboration, of self-directed learning and scaffolded co-construction, and there are five core features of the approach that underpin this overarching aim:

### 1.2.1 Student choice and agency

Students choose the language they wish to learn. The reasons for their language choice may be varied but a study into the original LF project highlights the importance of choice, finding that "choice in language learning is positively aligned with motivation for language learning" (Hawkes, 2011a, p.16). According to the findings in this early report, it is not just a question of choosing the language of study, but perhaps more importantly is a matter of learners exercising control over other significant aspects of their learning such as topic choice, selection of language within a topic, methods of learning, resources, classroom activities, and follow-up work outside the classroom. The link between autonomy within LF and learner motivation is a key focus for the present study, too. As Dörnyei rightly notes, "Autonomy and motivation go hand in hand." (Dörnyei, 2014).

### 1.2.2 Teacher as designer and facilitator

With the explicit emphasis on student autonomy, the role of the teacher within LF is deliberately different from that of language teacher in the traditional secondary classroom context. The teacher is a specialist linguist, but may not have expertise in all or any of the languages being learnt in the LF classroom. LF teachers design and frame the learning through the creation and presentation of projects, and most importantly through the asking of strategic questions that prompt and probe students' understanding of particular language structures, help them to set goals for their learning, and offer guidance as to where to go for resources. Teachers advise students and mentors, and inspire confidence in the learning process through their encouragement and enthusiasm, which help learners to develop resilience, particularly in the early stages, when this more independent way of learning can prove challenging and hard to get used to. Earlier studies (Beckett, 2002; Stewart, 2007; Hawkes, 2011a and 2011b) indicate that learners respond differently to the opportunities for autonomy that the LF approach affords, and the extent to which the teacher is able to provide contingent support that meets the needs of individual learners is an aspect of the teacher role that warrants further investigation.

### 1.2.3 School as basecamp

This important concept indicates a deeper level of student engagement with learning, such that the timetabled lessons in school represent just one site of learning. Students within the LF approach are encouraged to take their language learning beyond the classroom in a variety of ways, and the degree to which they choose to do this is a significant indicator of intrinsic motivation. Previous LF case studies suggest that, where students embed language learning into their lives outside of school, progress may be significantly enhanced. The sorts of activities students might engage in include: listening to target language music, reading target language books, watching target language films, or other visual media (adverts, clips, music videos), following target language recipes, putting their gaming devices, mobile phones or social media applications into the target language, teaching the target language to a friend or family member, or conducting internet research. The impact of such voluntary activity is one aspect this research study aims to address.

### 1.2.4 Project-based learning

Most teacher and learners are familiar with the notion of project-based learning as an addition to their regular classroom-based learning. However, as the main pedagogical approach through which learning is achieved, project-based learning is rare in second language education (Beckett, 2006). In

the recent proliferation and popularity of student-centred teaching and learning strategies, such as group work, project work, inquiry-based learning, investigations, independent learning, collaborative enquiry, experiential learning, and active learning, proponents of rigorous project-based learning (or PBL) have been keen to define its essential elements. The Buck Institute for Education, an organisation at the forefront of PBL, published Gold Standard PBL: Essential Project Design Elements (BIE, 2015). Projects must have essential conceptual knowledge and understanding at their centre, but then must also build the 'success skills' of critical thinking/problem solving, collaboration, and self-management. Starting out with a challenging question, students engage in sustained inquiry, which involves generating further questions and using a range of resources to answer them. This activity is student-led. The authenticity required in genuine PBL occurs in Language Futures as learners engage with open-ended questions that have no one, correct answer, involve engagement with the target language culture and are connected to real-world experience in a target language country. Reflecting on their learning, students should develop language awareness, defined by the Association for Language Awareness as 'explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use,' as well as inter-cultural understanding. Projects should produce an output, a product, publication or presentation, which ideally have an (external) audience. The aim of this research study with respect to PBL is two-fold: firstly, to ascertain the degree to which LF projects represent project-based learning, and secondly, to explore the impact that this feature has on the overall approach.

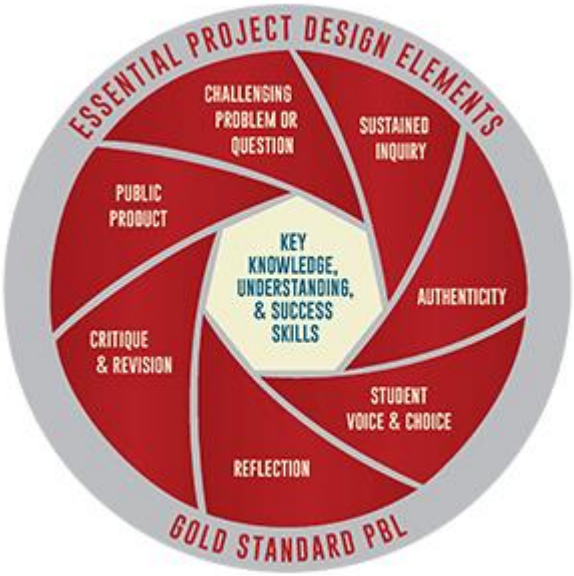


**Figure 2: Gold standard PBL: essential project design elements (Buck Institute for Education, 2015).**

### 1.2.5 Building a learning community

Within the LF approach, learning is essentially a social activity and co-constructed (Vygotsky 1962, 1978). Learning is not seen as the acquisition of knowledge by individuals so much as a process of *social* participation. The locus of learning is in the relationships between students, teacher, mentors and also parents and other family members or members of the community. LF sets out to provide a context for learning that supports and benefits from multiple, collaborative and dynamic constellations. Students share knowledge of and about language with each other by sharing their learning across language groups with, ideally, at least two students studying each language so that they can support and learn from each other. Students receive personalised support from language proficient mentors who are volunteers with an in-depth knowledge and fluency in a particular

language, recruited to provide good models of the language and to advise students on specific language queries and learning tasks. Teachers and students become partners in learning and a culture of collaborative endeavour is established in the classroom and beyond. Parents and other family members support and, in some instances, learn with and from their children. In this way, LF envisions a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 2000) in which the responsibility for learning is distributed and all participants are learners.

## 1.3 Theories of learning

Familiar though some, if not all, of these core features may be to teachers, their relationship to learning theory is perhaps less explicitly understood. The current educational language is a dazzling, oft bewildering plethora of terms, all of which carry, at least implicitly, assumptions about what knowledge is, and how learning occurs. Teachers, even highly reflective practitioners, are essentially pragmatic problem-solvers; they do what works. Pressure of time leads them often to 'cherry-pick' promising ideas and strategies, trying them out the following day in the classroom, without necessarily having the opportunity to examine their underlying principles, or connect to the epistemological well from which they are drawn. An empirical study offers the opportunity to explore those connections and understand them more fully, and in fact, it is a requirement. An in-depth understanding of the theoretical foundations of the Language Futures approach is a necessary first step in providing direction, purpose and coherence to this study.

Learning theories are far from unified, mutually-exclusive explanations of knowing. There are multiple, overlapping, dynamic collections of ideas about learning that, superficially at least, share some of the same elements. Underlying their apparent similarity, however, are different beliefs about reality and knowledge, which substantially change the emphases on, and interpretations of, learning behaviours and processes. As Kuhn notes: 'they seldom employ these borrowed elements in quite the traditional way. Within the new paradigm, old terms, concepts, and experiments fall into new relationships one with the other.' (Kuhn, 1996, p.149).

The table below brings together and presents a comparison of three overarching theories of knowing and learning: Behaviourism, Cognitivism and Social Constructivism. Rather than providing a comprehensive overview, it is a selective comparison highlighting key aspects of learning relevant to the Learning Futures approach.

**Table 1: Four learning paradigms**

| | Behaviourism | Cognitivism | Constructivism | Social constructivism |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Core principle** | All human behaviour, including learning, is a response to external stimuli, and it is understood and explained through observable changes in behaviour | Cognitivism understands and explains human behaviour, including learning) by focusing on mental processes, how information is received, organized, stored, and retrieved by the mind | Constructivism emphasises the interaction between thought and experience. Meaning is created rather than acquired. There is no direct transfer of knowledge from external world to individual mind, rather the individual builds knowledge through interaction and experience | Social constructivist theories of learning emphasise knowledge sharing, and collaborative meaning making through experience and exchange |
| **Nature of knowledge** | 'What' | 'What' and 'how' | 'What' and 'how' in meaningful context | 'What' and 'how' in meaningful context |
| **Student choice / agency** | Students exercise little control over their learning | Teacher is in overall charge. Students are encouraged to have input into aspects of their learning | High student control over many aspects of learning | High student control over many aspects of learning |
| **Role of the teacher** | To design effective stimuli to elicit correct responses reliably and efficiently from learners | To plan and present new knowledge with regard to achieving optimum retention and retrieval, taking account of what learners already know and individual learner strengths and preference | To use tasks that prompt learners to perceive patterns and formulate their own answers, ensuring that new concepts are embedded in authentic contexts | To design flexible, open-ended learning projects, driven by challenging questions, and create an environment in which responsibility for learning is shared |
| **Most typical interaction pattern** | Teacher - student | Teacher - student | Teacher - student | Student - student |
| **Role of memory** | Learning is memorable if the cues are right, and the practice rigorous and regular enough | Learning is memorable if information is stored in memory in an organized, meaningful manner | Learning is memorable if the opportunities for use are 'real' and context-embedded. The emphasis is not on recall but on contextualised use | Memory is synonymous with use. The emphasis is not on recall but on contextualised use |
| **Assessment** | Summative | Summative and formative | Formative and summative, integrated with learning | Formative and summative, integrated with learning |
| **Motivation** | A response to positive and negative reinforcement mechanisms | Includes cognitive and affective dimensions, and has intrinsic and extrinsic origins | A dynamic system of strands that reside in, and are influenced by, personal, social and environmental factors | Motivation is synonymous with engagement / participation |

As suggested within the table above, different paradigms and learning theories suggest different ways of organising learning, and different relationships between the participants. In the Language Futures approach, there is a discernible emphasis on the social constructivist paradigm. However, we must be careful not to conflate theories of knowing with theories of pedagogy, and assume that in constructivist classrooms students will never listen to explanations by the teacher or other expert. Learning theories are beliefs about how knowledge is created. Nevertheless, just as there is every reason to employ the teaching strategies and methods that most clearly align themselves with a given paradigm, it also makes sense to design a research methodology that is congruent with the underlying principles of the focus of the study. I return to this matter therefore in subsequent chapters of this report.

### 1.4 Motivation

A salient thread running through the five core features of LF is engagement, or motivation. The pivotal role motivation plays in language learning is clear: 'In a long term learning process such as the mastery of a second language, the learner's ultimate success always depends on the level of motivation' (Dörnyei, 2014). As the table indicates, motivation, seen through a social constructivist lens is synonymous with engagement; it is not about individual intra-psychological traits, it is a matter of volitional participation in social learning activity that is dynamic and jointly-constructed. (Kaplan & Patrick, 2016). As I outline in the concluding chapter, the operationalisation of motivation was an emergent theme within the pilot study, which had implications for design decisions for the main study.

## Chapter 2: The pedagogical landscape in England

Pedagogical approaches do not exist in a vacuum. They are, more often than not, a response to a problem with the status quo. The impetus for the first model of Language Futures, at Linton Village College in Cambridgeshire, came from the then Deputy Principal, Vivien Corrie, who was concerned with the conundrum of foreign language learning in schools in England: 'Why is it that our students find language learning so different and are so often disengaged with languages when our continental counterparts are able to become so fluent and are often highly motivated?' (Rice, 2013). The school's answer was a pedagogical innovation that became Language Futures. The current research project, of which this is the pilot study report, aims to explore the learning opportunities offered by this approach. Seven years after the first Language Futures model, it is relevant to evaluate briefly the current state of languages teaching and learning in secondary schools in England, as well as to review the findings from previous research studies of Language Futures.

### 2.1 The current language learning context in England

Numbers of students learning a foreign language beyond the age of 14 in schools in England declined markedly from 2002 onwards until 2010, when just 43% of the cohort took a GCSE in a foreign language. In response to this, and the decline in entries for other 'academic' subjects such as history and geography, the government introduced the English Baccalaureate, a performance measure for schools in England, first applied in the 2010 school performance tables. It measures the achievement of pupils who have gained Key Stage 4 (GCSE level) qualifications in the following subjects: English, mathematics, history or geography, science and a modern foreign language.

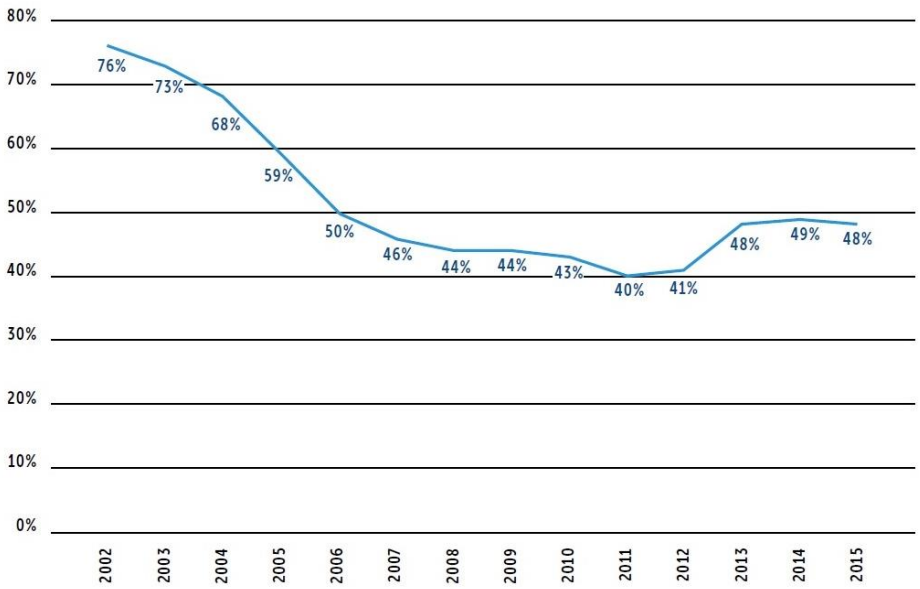


**Figure 3: Proportion of end of Key Stage 4 students sitting a GCSE in a language, 2002 – 2015.**

After an initial upturn in the number of languages entries to 48% in 2013 the situation stagnated, prompting the government to announce in June 2015 that 90% pupils beginning Year 7 in September 2015 will study the EBacc at GCSE level, meaning they will take their GCSEs in those subjects in 2020 (Gibb, 2015). However, according to the most recent Language Trends Survey, schools are not preparing for big increases in numbers taking languages at GCSE as a result of the compulsory EBacc proposal (Tinsley & Board, 2016). The study reports students' reluctance to study a language and the perceived unsuitability of GCSE for all students as the most significant barriers to higher uptake of languages post-14. Alarmingly, opportunities to study a language are still associated with high-performing schools and those with low levels of socio-economic deprivation. In the Association for Language Learning's statement on GCSE results 2016, current ALL President René Koglbauer drew attention to another year of fewer entries for GCSE and A level languages, saying that they 'demonstrate that policy makers' expectations of an upwards trend in language entries as a consequence of the EBacc measure have not been met'. (Koglbauer, 2016).

It is against this sobering background of unsuccessful policy interventions and persistent lack of student engagement with language learning nationally that I review the findings from two small-scale research studies (Hawkes, 2011a, 2011b) which examined the Language Futures Approach.

## 2.2 Indications from previous Language Futures research

The first study (Hawkes, 2011a) focused on 14 students who had completed the first Language Futures programme from September 2009 until July 2011, when they were in Years 8 and 9. Following the completion of that project, all 14 participants and the Teaching Assistant who had worked with them throughout, were interviewed individually, in pairs or small groups. These interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed to produce a report, which synthesised key emerging themes to provide both a source of information to other schools wishing to embark on Language Futures or other student-centred language learning approaches, as well as relevant feedback to the project school as it set up its next phase.

This small-scale interpretative study explored the motivational aspects of choice of language and learner agency, the roles of teacher and mentors, the progress made by students, as well as their attitudes to Language Futures and to language learning more generally. The second study (Hawkes, 2011b) reviewed changes made to the programme for the new cohort, as a result of the first study.

The Language Futures approach explored in the study led to the identification of 'nuggets of gold' (Hawkes, 2011a), elements of promise that require further investigation and development. The report makes a persuasive case that 'choice in language learning is positively aligned with motivation for language learning'. There were glimmers of the potential for achieving the deeper levels of learner engagement needed to blur the boundaries between classroom learning and learning beyond the classroom. There were also tensions that emerged between the aims of the approach and the individual needs of the learners, and differences in learner responses to the opportunities that increased autonomy presented. The indications in the study were, in general, that linguistic progress, as measured by former national curriculum levels, was slower than in a traditional teacher-led classroom. This too was an aspect requiring further research, as it raised questions as to whether the definition of 'progress' needed broadening to include aspects of language learning competence, such as language awareness (Hawkins, 1984), autonomy (Little, 1997) or language learning strategies (Macaro, 2001, 2007) which, the report suggest, may be developed within the Language Futures approach.

### 2.3 Overarching research purpose

The overall purpose of this pilot study (as also the main study of which it is a part), was to add to the findings of the initial small-scale studies by carrying out further case studies of Language Futures approaches in a number of schools, with a view to increasing the knowledge base about language learning within the LF approach, as well as to provide teachers and other stakeholders with a number of richly detailed accounts of the LF approach in action. I turn now to a detailed account of the pilot study methodology.

## Chapter 3: Pilot Study Methodology

### 3.1 Methodological paradigm

The assumptions about knowing and learning that underpin the Language Futures approach are explored in detail in Chapter 1. As previously mentioned, it is appropriate to align the research approach with the theory underlying the object of the inquiry, and it is equally important that there should be coherence between the epistemological stance invoked and the methodological approach adopted by the researcher (Crotty, 2003). This chapter sets out the link between the methods of data collection and analysis and the overall methodological paradigm and epistemology that support them. The main part of this chapter describes in detail the design and use of the research methods, procedures, setting and tools used in the pilot study. The final sections consider the validity and reliability of the research, and discuss its ethical considerations.

Qualitative or interpretative research assumes that reality is mentally and social constructed. What can be known within this view of the world is situation-specific and partial, but the pursuit of such knowledge aims to yield greater understanding about a given phenomenon through the cumulative addition to previous knowledge of the same. Key characteristics of qualitative research are: the goal of in-depth understanding, an emic (insider) perspective, the research as principal means of data collection and analysis, the collection of data within a natural setting, an inductive approach to data analysis and rich description (Merriam, 1998). The detailed study of one particular situation or 'case' is an approach often used in interpretative research. The purpose of this study was to understand language learning within the Language Futures approach. This overarching aim was the basis upon which the following research questions were formulated and the point of departure for the detail of my research design which follows. In the next section of this chapter I list my research questions and describe the key elements of my research strategy. I then describe the methods I used in the study, the data that these generated and the ways in which the data were analysed.

## 3.2 Research questions

**1 What progress do pupils make following the Language Futures approach?**

The aim of this research question was to describe what learners are able to do in the language they are learning in Language Futures, focusing on what they are able to communicate in speech and writing using the language. It was also important to describe progress from the participants' (learners, teacher and mentors) perspective, and explore the relationship between perceptions of progress and engagement in the approach.

**2 How does their progress compare to conventional classroom-based progress in language learning?**

This question hinges on the nature of language learning progress within the Language Futures approach, and the extent to which it is different from other more conventional classroom-based progress. As we know from the description of the approach in Chapter 1 LF differs substantially from conventional classroom-based language teaching and learning. Where the design and organisation of teaching and learning are so different, we may expect the learning, and therefore the progress, to be qualitatively different as well, as previous studies have suggested. The goal of this question was to describe all aspects of progress within the LF programme and set these within the context of teacher, learner and researcher perceptions of progress in more traditional classroom-based language learning. The study did not include a comparative, experimental element. All learners and teachers involved in the study were also engaged in language-learning within conventional contexts at the same time as their involvement with Language Futures, so the aim was to draw together learner, teacher and researcher perceptions of comparative progress in the two approaches.

**3 What are some of the key factors that impact on this approach?**

Previous studies indicated that elements of the Language Futures approach were aligned with a deepening engagement in language learning. However, there were individual differences in the extent to which the learning affordances of the LF approach were taken up. This question seeks to identify the key factors of Language Futures that influence learners' engagement in language learning, exploring their impact on different learners. The study builds on previously identified features but in keeping with the open-ended nature of qualitative research is attentive to the emergence of other factors.

## 3.3 Research strategy

This pilot study followed a qualitative case study approach. In keeping with the main methods for qualitative research, the study included interviews, observation and document analysis. However, as with many recent studies within educational research, the study included elements of a mixed-methods approach, questionnaires and descriptive analysis, whilst continuing to meet fully the conditions of a qualitative paradigm. As I explain in more detail in the sections that follow, any small-scale quantitative work within the study served as a starting point for further qualitative inquiry. One further point about qualitative research is that its design should aim to be as flexible and reflexive to change as possible, notwithstanding any logistical constraints. As will emerge in the account that follows, a degree of flexibility was required at key stages in the research process.

### 3.3.1 Case Study

The qualitative case study approach seeks in-depth knowledge within natural settings (Bassey, 1999), which applies to the classroom context of this pilot study. In qualitative case studies conducted in educational settings, as Merriam (1998) notes: 'The interest is in process rather than

outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation.'

The specific type of case study design is influenced by its overall purpose. Stake (1995), Bassey (1999), and Yin (2003) use different terms to define a variety of case study types. Stake (1995) uses the description 'instrumental' for studies whose core purpose is 'to understand something else' (Stake, 1995, p.3). The case may be a teacher or class but the aim is to illuminate something other than the peculiarities of the case itself. The 'instrumental' in this case study was to understand process of language learning within the Language Futures approach through the study of a particular case, or cases. In the pilot study, the case, the class of teacher, learners and mentors, plays a supportive role in facilitating our understanding of Language Futures learning. The rich detail of the singular case is of primary importance precisely because it supports a better understanding of the LF approach.

Further definition of the pilot case study design is provided by Yin's (1993) identification of three types of case study: exploratory, explanatory and descriptive:

> An exploratory case study… is aimed at defining the questions and hypotheses of a subsequent (not necessarily case) study… A descriptive case study presents a complete description of a phenomenon within its context. An explanatory case study presents data bearing on case-effect relationships – explaining which causes produced which effects. (1993, p.5)

Within this definition I locate and define the pilot study as both exploratory and descriptive, given that it explores a learning context in which the learning approach has, as yet, no clearly-defined outcomes, and that it describes the LF approach within the real-life context in which it occurs.

Finally, this study conforms to Bassey's (1999) model of evaluative case study, which seeks to describe, interpret or explain what is happening.

### 3.3.2 Research design summary

My research design comprised an exploratory, descriptive, evaluative case study situated within a constructivist framework that informed the study's theoretical and pedagogical purposes. The following table provides a summary of my research design, including the principal methods:

**Table 2: Research design summary**

| Research question | Research aims | Research paradigms | Research methods |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1) What progress do students make following the Language Futures approach?** | To detail the linguistic progress that learners make in terms of spoken and written output and to explore | Descriptive Case Study | Observation<br>Recording and analysis of individual learner speaking tasks<br>Analysis of student written responses<br>Student self-report data<br>Student interviews<br>Teacher interview<br>Thematic and open coding<br>Micro-textual analysis |
| **2) How does their progress compare to conventional classroom-based progress in language learning?** | To compare progress within Language Futures with conventional classroom-based progress, and explore in detail the nature of progress, including linguistic, meta-linguistic and other skills | Descriptive Case Study | Observation<br>Recording and analysis of individual learner speaking tasks<br>Analysis of student written responses<br>Student self-report data<br>Student interviews<br>Teacher interview<br>Thematic and open coding<br>Micro-textual analysis |
| **3) What are some of the key factors that impact on this approach?** | To explore the perceptions of all participants in the Language Futures approach in order to identify, describe and analyse the key factors that impact on its effectiveness for language learning | Descriptive Case Study | Classroom observation notes<br>Teacher interviews<br>Learner interviews<br>Mentor interviews |

## 3.4 Context

This pilot study focused on one Language Futures school. Its purpose was to trial data collection techniques, including teacher and student interview protocols, teacher and student questionnaires, student speaking and writing tasks, and subsequently to evaluate the methodology for data reduction, the tools and process for data coding and analysis, and to generate some initial findings that would steer the main research study. In the report that follows I describe the decision-making processes that developed during the pilot and their implications for the overall study.

### 3.4.1 The pilot school

The first criterion in the selection of cases is 'to maximise what we can learn' (Stake, 1995, p.4). For the pilot study (and most case studies), the central concern was not the representativeness of the sample but the receptiveness of the 'case' to the project. In this respect, time and access were important considerations, but of equal importance was finding a school and a Language Futures teacher prepared to be involved in the study. Although the school, teacher and students are anonymised in the study, I wish to thank them all for their time and willingness to participate.

The school in this pilot study is a mixed gender secondary academy, part of a multi-academy trust in the East of England. Rated 'good' in its last Ofsted inspection, the school has a higher than average proportion of pupil premium students (pupil premium being additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and those with a parent in the armed services). The proportion of students who represent minority ethnic groups is above average and so is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students who need additional support with their learning; those at school action plus and those with a statement of special educational needs is just above average.

### 3.4.2 The Language Futures model

The Language Futures approach has, unsurprisingly, generated a variety of different models in the schools that have implemented it to date. It is essential therefore to describe in detail the particularities of each school's model as a starting point for any study. It is only with such a detailed understanding that any meaningful analysis of the progress learners make and the overall impact of the approach can be carried out.

In the pilot study school, to be referred to as School A, the model of Language Futures was an in-curriculum model for a group of 14 Year 8 (age 12-13) students. All students at the school learn French from Year 7 and throughout Key Stage 3. The group of students who began Language Futures at the start of Year 8 was selected to do so. One of the aims of the model was to provide a more motivational context for language learning for certain students whose progress and behaviour within mainstream language lessons was of some concern. Within the model's design, students continued to learn French in two of their three hourly lessons each week, one lesson as mainstream classroom teaching, one lesson in two smaller French groups, and one lesson working on a cultural project in their chosen LF language. This model had the full support of the senior leadership team, and carried the expectation that all students would achieve their target (old) national curriculum level 4 in French by the end of Year 8. The majority of students in this class was not expected to continue with a language to GCSE during Key Stage 4.

In terms of its design, this model of Language Futures comprised elements of the five core features of the approach, whilst not implementing them fully, as described:

**Student choice and agency**

Although students did not choose to participate in Language Futures, the students in the group were initially given a free choice of language to learn in the one LF session each week, whilst they continued with French for the remainder of their curriculum language time. The languages chosen were Polish, Latvian, Spanish, Portuguese and Chinese. In terms of choice of what and how to learn, students were able to make choices about the focus of their cultural project, and had access to a range of resources, principally online resources, that they were able to browse and select and adapt for themselves.

**Teacher as designer and facilitator**

During the LF lessons in School A, the teacher's role was to support learning and guide students with their use of resources for their cultural projects, giving them feedback and suggestions for improvements as appropriate. She was not a speaker of several of the languages, but as knowledgeable linguist, she sought to help students to navigate and interpret what they found online. She was also the point of contact between the students and their sixth form mentors, whose role I describe in more detail later in the report. At other times, the teacher reverted to the role of mainstream class teacher of French.

**School as basecamp**

As previously explained, where school-based lessons represent just one site of learning, and when students choose to take their learning beyond the classroom, this indicates a significant level of engagement in learning, and is suggestive of greater learning progress over time. It is not unique to the Language Futures approach, but it is one of its core features. This pilot study therefore explored the extent to which LF students in School A were engaging in extra-curricular learning.

**Project-based learning**

In their LF lessons, learners in School A completed cultural projects in their LF language. Through teacher and student interview, teacher and student questionnaires and short speaking and writing tasks, this study probed the impact of project-based learning on student motivation, knowledge and skill development and overall progress, the analysis revealing both positive outcomes and some limiting factors.

**Building a learning community**

Affective support and linguistic scaffolding are key components of the Language Futures classroom. Previous models of the project provide evidence that peer support fulfils several important functions. Language expert adult mentors from the community have also proven essential to the success of previous schools' versions of the programme. The main study aims to extend our understanding of the impact of both sources of support (peer and mentor). In this pilot study, the School A LF mentors were mainly sixth form students, native speakers of the different languages. Their impact on students' learning is evaluated in the analysis that follows.

### 3.4.3 The participants

#### 3.4.3.1 The learners

At the time of data collection for this pilot study there were 14 students in the class. The group had an extremely diverse academic profile in terms of previous and current achievement in English and maths, attitudes to school and learning, and classroom behaviour. Seven students had SEN (Special Educational Needs) including low literacy and dyslexia, including three students with major SEMB (Social, Emotional, Mental and Behavioural) difficulties. Of these, one was additionally EAL (English as an Additional Language). In total, six students were EAL. Contrary to initial expectations when the group was created, five of the 14 students had elected to continue with a language (French or Spanish) to GCSE and were set to begin the three-year GCSE course the following year in Year 9.

#### 3.4.3.2 The teacher

The Language Futures teacher was a full-time teacher of French and Spanish at the school. She was, at the time of the study, in her second year at the school, completing the second year of a two-year TeachFirst teacher training programme, during which the participants complete their NQT year, after achieving QTS at the end of the first year. As with all TeachFirst participants, this teacher was placed in a school in a 'low income community' in keeping with the programme's aims to improve

educational equality. Teacher participants undergo a rigorous selection process and are expected to display the potential for leadership, as well as excellent levels of communication, decision-making skills and psychological resilience (Hill, 2012). At the time of the pilot study, the teacher was on track to complete a very successful NQT year and was committed to continuing as a languages teacher.

#### 3.4.3.3 The mentors

As indicated in earlier sections of this report, mentors are an integral part of the Language Futures approach. In the pilot study school, the mentors were native speaker sixth form students. However, at the time of the study, mentor involvement was minimal, and there was no direct interaction between the research and any mentors.

### 3.5 Research methods: data collection

As is typical within qualitative case study research, there were multiple data sources, including recordings of student spoken responses to a picture stimulus, student written responses, student interviews informed by short student questionnaires, teacher questionnaire and teacher interviews.

An initial visit was made to the pilot school, including an unstructured interview with the Language Futures teacher and the Head of Languages. This interview was not recorded, but field notes were made, which informed the design of language tasks (Appendices A and B), the questionnaires (Appendices C and D) and the questions for the semi-structured teacher interview (Appendix E). The field notes were included in the documents available for thematic analysis.

The linguistic and self-report data outlined above were collected on one day's visit to the pilot school, approximately two months following the initial visit. It coincided with a Language Futures lesson. For logistical reasons the lesson itself was not directly observed, but I conducted individual student interviews and speaking tasks with six of the thirteen students present on the day. Thirteen students completed the questionnaire and the written task, supervised by the Language Futures teacher during their usual lesson time. In the explanation to students, the teacher stressed that the focus of the visit was the Language Futures approach and not their individual performance, and that the tasks were not assessments. There was an element of teacher and self-selection in the six students who were interviewed. The teacher made a preliminary selection based on those students she felt would feel least inhibited about talking to a visitor and be best able to articulate their thoughts and ideas, but students themselves were able to select or de-select themselves on the day from the sample, without any pressure. The final number of six interviewees was limited by the time factor rather than any other strategic consideration.

### 3.5.1 Linguistic data

The written task (Appendix B) was designed after input from the Language Futures teacher during the initial visit, and also from the questionnaire she completed shortly afterwards (Appendix D). The aim was to ensure that the level of challenge was realistic for all the students in the group, that the specific language areas of focus were topics with which the learners had engaged for sufficient time, and that the task offered enough guidance and structure for all students whilst allowing for differentiated levels of response. Students completed the task at the start of their usual Language Futures lesson and were allowed the time they needed to complete it. They completed it without referring to any resources, including their own previous work.

The speaking task (Appendix A) was also informed by the LF teacher. It focused on sport, the current topic for learners in the group at the time. The photo shows students (boys and girls) approximately the same age as the study participants playing football. The selection of photo was envisaged as a very accessible way to elicit an initial opinion about football. The written prompts below the photo

were designed to enable students to move away from football to refer to other sports and hobbies, as appropriate to each student's individual preferences.

As previously mentioned, six students completed the speaking task. Each one worked individually with me and the tasks were recorded. Initially the intention had been to conduct speaking tasks separately from student interviews. However, after the first speaking task, in which the student appeared very hesitant and produced a very minimal response, I wondered whether perhaps the task-taking scenario was too intimidating to get the best responses from the students. I therefore experimented with a different approach, asking each student to bring his/her completed questionnaire, written task and portfolio to share with me during a short interview, in which I used some of the questionnaire responses to lead into the interview questions. At the end of the interview I asked students to take a minute to look at the speaking task photo and then to give their response in their Language Futures language. I continued this approach with the remaining five students. In the analysis chapter that follows, I explore the implications of this change in the data collection process.

It is worth noting that all prompts for the written and speaking tasks were in English; as students in the Language Futures group study a variety of different languages, English prompts were considered the most straightforward choice here. In view of the age and ability profiles of the learners, care was taken the keep the prompts as brief and clear as possible.

### 3.5.2 Self-report data

The four main sources of self-report data in the pilot study were: student questionnaires (Appendix C), student interviews, teacher questionnaire (Appendix D) and teacher interview (Appendix E). Three of these were collected on the research day visit, and the teacher questionnaire was collected two weeks beforehand.

The student questionnaires were completed directly following the written task, during the Language Futures lesson. Students were asked to give their own answers, and not to discuss them with other students. They were not given a time limit but were allowed to take as long as they needed to complete it.

The student questionnaire was adapted from one used in a recent research investigation into the progress of primary French learners (Graham et al., 2014). The participants in that study were aged 10 (Year 6) and 11 (Year 7). I borrowed the use of smiley faces and simple word prompts and style of lay-out, taking account of the SEND and EAL needs within the LF group. There are four sections in the questionnaire. Section 1 includes one multiple choice and three verbal response questions designed to elicit levels of engagement with Language Futures lessons and reflections on the differences between classroom-based learning. As this cohort had experienced several changes to the way in which their language learning was organised during Year 8, I felt it was more straightforward to ask them to compare their LF experiences with their French learning in Year 7. Section 2 questions were all multiple choice and sought students' perceptions of their current level of progress in their LF language, asking questions about different aspects of linguistic proficiency. Section 3 asks learners to anticipate their progress over the LF course and predict what they will be able to do at the end of the year. This section was less relevant to the pilot group as the study was conducted relatively close to the end of their LF course, but I decided to keep the questions in for reasons I discuss in the analysis chapter below. Section 4 has five multiple choice questions that pertain to students' attitudes to language learning more generally. This section very similar to the original survey which I adapted.

The purpose of the student questionnaires was primarily to suggest fruitful themes to follow up in the student interviews, which were scripted only in the sense that they explored responses that

students had given. The teacher questionnaire was designed with two purposes: first, to elicit contextual information about the specific Languages Future model, as well as about the learners, and second, to inform the interview questions and the speaking and writing task design. As such, it was important to complete this well in advance of the main data collection visit. Feedback from the Language Futures teacher who completed it indicated that it look between one to one and a half hours to complete, but that it was a very valuable activity in helping her to process and reflect on the Language Futures approach ahead of the interview.

Semi-structured interviews are the most common type of interview for qualitative research. (Dörnyei, 2007), and is appropriate when the researcher has substantial knowledge of the object of the research to develop some questions in advance. The in-depth teacher interview took a little under one hour and was recorded. I took additional hand-written notes during the interview.

### 3.5 Research methods: data analysis

The overall approach to analysis in this study was inductive, but it was guided by the overall theoretical and conceptual framework of Learning Futures. A large proportion of the data collected for this study was collected as raw oral data. These were spoken task responses, student interviews and teacher interview. The key processes involved in data analysis of the oral data were transcription, coding, interpretive pattern-finding and micro-textual analysis. As a first step there was some limited descriptive analysis, involving numerical counts and frequencies of the student questionnaire data. These served to trigger questions for further exploration through the fine-grained textual analysis of other data.

I include first a table summarising the data analysis schedule and then describe each of the key analytic processes in turn in the following sub-sections:

**Table 3: Data Analysis schedule**

| **Phase 1: Data reduction** | **Time** | **Data Analysis Activity** |
|---|---|---|
| Student questionnaires | July 2016 | Numerical counts<br>Written collation of verbal questionnaire responses into one electronic document |
| Student written tasks | July 2016 | Typed transcription of individual student written responses into one electronic document |
| Student interviews | August 2016 | Transcribed and saved as Word documents |
| Teacher interview | August 2016 | Transcribed and saved as Word documents |
| Student speaking tasks | August 2016 | Transcribed and saved as Word documents |
| **Phase 2: Coding** | **Time** | **Data Analysis Activity** |
| Data coding | August 2016 | Thematic and open coding of all textual data |
| **Phase 3: Analysis** | **Time** | **Data Analysis Activity** |
| Descriptive analysis | August 2016 | Pattern-finding within numerical questionnaire data |
| Interpretive analysis | August 2016 | Data explored & patterns identified within and between all documented data |

### 3.5.2 Descriptive analysis

The purpose of the numerical counts and frequencies were a first step; part display and part analysis. (Foster & Ohta, 2005). The questionnaire's purpose was not to generate generalisable findings but to contribute to the overall description of the cases, the students, in order to know more about their experience of language learning with the Language Futures approach. The expectation was, in addition, that the data would highlight patterns that triggered further exploration.

### 3.5.1 Transcription and coding

I transcribed all of the recorded oral data verbatim myself. I initially considered outsourcing the transcription for logistical reasons, but I felt strongly that transcription is a key part of the analysis process, where initial points of interest are registered within the data, and that the 'hands-on' working that the transcription involves increases the reflexivity of the researcher. To facilitate the process, I used the 'change tempo' function in the free open source digital audio editing software Audacity, as this enabled me to slow the audio speed. At the end of each interview transcription I re-listened to the interview at normal speed, checking the transcript and amending any inaccuracies. I sent the teacher interview transcript to the Language Futures teacher for checking.

All textual data, in the form of word documents, were then imported into NVivo qualitative data analysis software (QSR International Pty Ltd. Version 11, 2015). I then proceeded to code the data, using a system of open coding consistent with an inductive approach to analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Following Charmaz (2006) I completed 'line by line' coding during the process of 'initial coding', extending and elaborating my taxonomy of codes to fit all of the interview, field notes and student task data. This was one way I remained intentionally close to all of the raw data during analysis. The full list of codes that became my coding framework is in Appendix F.

In informing this study's research questions, the theoretical and conceptual framework of Language Futures was instrumental in determining where to look and what to look for. This was not the neutral 'unmotivated looking' of conversation analysis (Mori, 2004, p.539) but without determining codes a priori I was committed to coding in response to the data and not in advance of them.

### 3.5.3 Thematic analysis

Following the initial elaboration of themes through coding, the themes were explored further using an iterative process of reading and re-reading, using NVivo tools (e.g. Query Wizard) to display parts of the data in different configurations, examining possible connections and relationships between content coded thematically. This is a fascinating (and time-intensive) process, and care is needed to stay as close to the raw data as possible, and avoid easy assumptions and convenient patterns. This was another key phase of the study (as well as the data collection itself) that considerations as to the suitability of each of the research tools came to the fore, and I explain the consequences and implications for the main study in the concluding chapter of this report.

## 3.6 Ethics

Decisions taken at the design stage were informed by both the Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (BERA, 2014) and the Recommendations on Good Practice in Applied Linguistics (BAAL, 2000) but ethical considerations emerged as the study evolved and I resolved each in a spirit of respect for all those involved in the study, as well as for the integrity of the research. The main aspects that I needed to consider involved issues of consent; anonymity and confidentiality; and my relationship to the teachers involved. I describe each of these in turn in the sub-sections that follow.

### 3.6.1 Consent

Informed consent for the study from the school was obtained at the senior leadership level via exchange of letter with the pilot school's principal at the planning stage. The Language Futures teacher and Head of Languages Department had already given their consent to participate at the time of the initial school visit, approximately two months before the data collection visit. It was not possible to gain informed consent from parents for the study. As explained elsewhere in the report, they were not aware of the Language Futures programme. Students participated by consent in the interviews and speaking tasks on the day. The written task and questionnaire were completed by all as part of their Language Futures lesson time and work.

### 3.6.2 Anonymity and confidentiality

The commitment to guarantee confidentiality and maintain full anonymity was made to all participants and has been upheld. In addition, I undertook to keep all audio-recorded data and documentation securely and ensure that it does not enter the public domain.

### 3.6.3 Teacher-Researcher relationship

It is worth noting that the nature of this study, with its primary focus on understanding the impact of a theoretically and pedagogically-defined approach, is less likely to invoke high levels of sensitivity than other qualitative research studies that set out probe more deeply into teachers' individual beliefs or competences. However, teachers are deeply concerned with their students' learning and engagement in language learning and invest a great deal in trying to develop it. Disclosure and transparency are, therefore, critical elements in the teacher-researcher relationship. In this study the methods of data collection and the instruments used were informed by input from the initial meeting between the LF teacher, Head of Languages and me. The teacher interview transcript was sent for checking by the LF teacher, and this draft report was sent to both the LF teacher and Head of Languages for comments, and time for review, before it was made public.

## Chapter 4: Analysis

This purpose of analysis within this pilot study was two-fold: first, the goal was to ascertain the extent to which the research tools were 'fit for purpose', and identify potential improvements to the overall research design, and second, the case study aimed to generate findings in its own right that would contribute to the developing understanding of the Language Futures approach, building on earlier findings, and setting the scene for the main study to follow. I organise the analysis in this chapter around the three overarching research questions, drawing on thematic analysis of all of the data sources, focusing first on linguistic progress, then detailing a comparison of progress in Language Futures and conventional classroom teaching, and finally offering an exploration of the range of factors that impact on the LF approach. Observations regarding the scope and suitability of the research tools are distributed relevantly throughout the chapter, but are drawn together for more detailed consideration in the final chapter of the report.

### 4.1 Linguistic progress

Notions of progress require context. It is essential to know the learning aims, the planned content to be learned, both in terms of topic and structural (grammatical) focus, and just as importantly, how the learning is organised, i.e. what sorts of learning activities the students typically engage in. Information to build a picture of the learning was drawn from the four self-report data sources, and is displayed in the summary matrix Table 4 below:

**Table 4: Summary matrix of LF pilot school learning (Phase 2: April – June) Self-report data**

| ***Data source*** | **Teacher questionnaire** | **Teacher interview** | **Student interview** | **Student questionnaire** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Content learning | All about me (sport, leisure and free time).<br><br>Describing and introducing yourself and others.<br><br>My country and the Euros 2016.<br><br>My country's participation in the Olympic Games | "So with tasks that I'm trying to use at the moment that students are already engaged with the broader context so we did Euros for the last week and a bit and their country's involvement in the Euros and we're now doing the road to Rio and their country's participation in that so sport as the macro and then cultural specific contextual stuff" | "This one like doing like sports and what like you like Olympics and we're learning about pets and like how to say different words in French." *Michelle*<br><br>"Like different topics like Olympics topics and other topics like if there's like oh what was it we learnt about I forgot what else we were learning about." *Aaron* | Statement: I can SAY a few sentences to describe myself.<br><br>8/12 students responded that they could do this quite well.<br><br>Statement: I can WRITE a few sentences to describe myself.<br><br>5/12 students responded that they could do this quite well. |
| Linguistic structures | Present tense verbs (I have, I am, I love, I hate)<br>Opinion structure + verb<br>Use of connectives to extend sentences | | "I could say words for sports I like and I don't like. I can say what I do like and what I do not like. I can say my opinion." *Sven* | |
| How learning was organised | The typical pattern to an LF lesson is a brief of the week-long focus (such as sport in our LF country). Teacher then hones in on vocabulary specific to this context, students investigate and feedback, practising pronunciation. Students find out individual words, the T then scaffolds the creation of full sentences in the LF language, such as 'I love football because it is fun and energetic'<br>At the end of 6 week unit, students, present their LF projects to the class, orally. They are assessed for speaking and research skills. They produce written work to accompany this, in their file | Research skills: "Look at a great deal of information on a webpage and to filter that down into less information and then find a key word that they need to look at in the target language"<br><br>"They like having something that is cumulative that they can add to each week. I think it helps their sense of ownership because eventually they're building up something bigger for their folder"<br><br>"Three lessons is my absolute maximum for a task-based learning project because they lose the engagement at about two to three" | "I like using computers, and it's fun to like translate words that I don't know, because I can remember them faster." *Sven*<br><br>"There's more activities than like normal lessons" *Aaron*<br><br>(referring to folders)<br>"You can store all your stuff and like print all the like good work you've done to show your teachers." *Aaron* | |

The multiple-source summary provides a far richer picture of the learning than any of the sources individually. However, the process of collating the detail highlighted some gaps and mismatches in both the student interview and questionnaire design. As will become clear in the analysis that follows, the general nature of the questionnaire items may not provide reliable data, and could be substituted by more targeted questions that address more directly the content, structures, and learning activities that students are engaged in.

As previously mentioned, in the pilot study the student participants brought their freshly completed questionnaire, written task and folder of work to the interview, and I referred to the student questionnaire of each student as I interviewed. This had the advantage of setting the student at ease on the one hand, and of giving me natural points of entry into discussion with the student. However, I felt on reflection that the student interviews would benefit from a little more structure. In addition, as it was not feasible to interview every student (nor will it be in the main study), then it would be beneficial to have completed student questionnaires in advance and use their analysis to support the selection of students for interview. This is fully in line with the goal of an instrumental case study (Stake, 1995). Including more open response questions targeting specific aspects of the Language Futures approach in the student questionnaire would also enrich the data, increasing its relevance to the research questions.

Notwithstanding these limitations, we glean important detail about the LF learning during the two-month period of the study. It is interesting to note that students have the most recent topic, the Olympics, uppermost in their minds and find it hard to recall what came even immediately before this. We know that learning is organised around a short project, in which independent research is a core feature. We learn that there are apparently opportunities for speaking: both teacher and students refer to developing pronunciation, 'like learn how to say words in French', and one student explicitly cites his ability to give his opinion of different sports. Whilst the learning builds towards a spoken presentation, students also produce written work for their portfolio folders. This seems to be something that students value and enjoy.

It was with these experiences of learning behind them that students completed the writing task (Appendix A) and the speaking task (Appendix B). During the coding of the speaking data, points of difference and interesting comparison emerged with relation to students' spoken and written output. As I had spoken data from six students only, I selected to display the written and spoken responses for those six students side by side for further investigation, as in Table 5, below. It is important to note that I transcribed the written responses exactly as students had produced them, with or without punctuation, with correct or incorrect spelling. The layout of each student's answer in three separate sections corresponds to the task design with three separate questions: 1. Write about yourself. 2. Write about things you like and don't like. 3. Write about sports and any other activities you do you in your free time. In transcribing students' oral responses, I adopted the practice of spelling correctly any words students pronounced recognisably as French, and approximating a phonetic transliteration of words that were mispronounced. Occasionally I felt it necessary to add in additional explanatory detail in []. Finally, note that, whilst the student ethnographic details are accurate, the names are pseudonyms.

These linguistic data are analysed in some detail in this section as they provide important findings that require further research in the main phase of the study.

**Table 5: Linguistic data: comparison of six students' speaking and writing**

| Student | Speaking | Writing |
|---|---|---|
| ***Ivan*** **–** LF language French (1-2 years classroom-based learning), additional language(s) – Polish, heritage speaker with some literacy, KS4 – opted for GCSE French | - le foot…er…je déteste le foot parce que er… I don't know how to pronounce the word it's really hard. I know to write it, it's like boring and like hard<br>- *Mm tell me how to write it and I'll try and pronounce*<br>- IT's E N N and then Y E U X I think<br>- *Ennuyeux… ennuyeux*<br>- Yeah. J'adore le nager (pronounced NAGGER) parce que interessent (anglicised pronunciation) is that how you say it? And I don't like Je n'aime pas …Je n'aime pas le foot parce que enn...why...a<br>- Ennuyeux<br>- Yeah ennuyeux | J m appelle Ivan. J ai 13 ans. J habitate Peterborough. Je suis la Pologne. J adore jouer PC. J aime nager et vélo.<br><br>J n aime pas le foot parce Que ennuyeux. J deteste étroit parce Que difficile.<br><br>J ai joue PC jeux et aller velo et nager. Aller avec mes amis. |
| ***Aaran*** - LF language French (1-2 years classroom-based learning), additional language(s) – Urdu, heritage speaker with no/little literacy, KS4 – opted for GCSE French | - Oh ok, um, the, I can't, I don't know how to say play but they're playing le foot, and they're very active, um…<br>- Opinion?<br>Um…my opinion<br>- Tu adores le foot? Tu détestes le foot?<br>Je adore.<br>- Uh.. pourquoi?<br>Dunno | Mon nom est Aaran. Je vis à Peterborough Woodston 10 boulangers voie et mon age est 13.<br><br>Mon J'adore BMXing et J'edetest Mon frere. J'aime McDonald et chicken palace et KFC.<br><br>Mon J'detest volley-Ball, Badminton et racing Je adore BMXing, foot, et cricket. Mon Active est gaming, le velo |
| ***Michelle*** – LF language French (1-2 years classroom-based learning), no additional language, not continuing with a language at KS4 | - What, do I have to say it in French?<br>- Yep, anything you can in French.<br>- Erm….I don't really know, it's easier like writing it down than saying it<br>- Yeah, I know. Can you say what sport it is, c'est le…<br>- football<br>- Mm, le football, and if I said give me your opinion of football what would you say..<br>- Er… je …..detest er football<br>- And are there any sports that you do like that you can say something else about? | Bonjour Nom Mon est Michelle. Jai trieze ans. J'habite en anglettre. Jai duex freres et duex soeurs. Jai un chien.<br><br>j'adore ma mere et papa. Jaime adore. Je deteste le football. I aime cusisner. Jaime jouer avec mon chien<br><br>Je ne fais pas tous les sports. I aime cuisiner. Et jaime aller nager |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | - I can't remember how to say swimming<br>- la natation did you write that down I think you did oh j'aime aller nager (reading from student's script) OK and can you tell me anything about you or your family in French<br>- J'ai deux freres er et deux soeurs<br>- Mm<br>- et je adore ma mer uh et papa | |
| ***Rebecca*** – LF language Spanish (absolute beginner), 1-2 years classroom based French, no additional language, opted for GCSE Spanish | *Seeing that the writing task had been completed entirely in English and knowing the student was new to the group (two-three weeks), I decided not to attempt the speaking task in Spanish* | My name is Rebecca. I am 13 years old. I live in england, Peterborough<br><br>I like to stay healthy I do loads of sports I love dogs and my family I hate spiders and and stressful teachers<br><br>My sports that I do is bmx biking<br>I go biking all around England to different places. It is so fun |
| ***Anna*** – LF language Spanish (absolute beginner), 1-2 years of classroom-based French, additional language – Polish, heritage speaker with some literacy, opted for GCSE Spanish | - Mi nombre es Anna….<br>- Dónde vives? Vivo..<br>- Vivo e Peterborough y erm..<br>- Ok, bien | Mi nombre es Anna, y yo 13 anos de eed yo vivo en Peterborough<br><br>Amo mi vida |
| ***Sven*** – LF language French (1-2 years classroom-based learning), additional language – Polish heritage speaker with some literacy, opted for GCSE French | - J'aime la foo parce que es amusan.. erm j'aime jouer la Playstation parce que er.. I forgot how to say it mmm.. I think that's it I forgot the word | Mon nom est Filip. J ai 13 ans. Mon hobby est de jouer sur play station. J'aime jouer au playstation parce qui est amusement. Je déteste la foot parce qui est stupide. J adore la badmintlto parce qui est amusement. Je n'aime la foot parce qui est stupide.J aime la natation. J adore la badminteton parce qie est amusement |

#### 4.1.1 Difficulties with pronunciation

The data in the study evidence the struggles students have with pronouncing the words they encounter. Many students in conventional language classrooms find 'ennuyeux' difficult to pronounce but what's interesting about Ivan's learning is that for him it is a question of not being able to attempt to sound out words that are clearly stored as accurate visual representations in memory. "…I don't know how to pronounce the word it's really hard. I know to write it…" He's clearly seen the word written down enough times to remember its spelling but he hasn't acquired a knowledge of phonics to apply to the pronunciation of new words, nor has he heard the words enough to acquire their accurate pronunciation. It's even more interesting that the spoken data here capture his microgenetic development; he hears the word *ennuyeux* three times within the short interaction with the researcher and then there is voluntary verbal uptake from him. The repeated input that is needed for full independent use of new language is something that appears to be missing from his learning within the LF lessons. Another student, Michelle, feels similarly that she can write better than she can speak: "Erm….I don't really know, it's easier like writing it down than saying it". Another student alludes to a lack of opportunity to fix the words in longer term memory with insufficient opportunity to encounter the words, hear and produce them: "here you just like read a lot of stuff and you need to remember it, and like teacher tells you this is this for example this means this and you have to remember it and it's really hard for me…"

#### 4.1.2 Difficulty with retrieval in speaking

In addition to difficulties with pronunciation, students also exhibit problems with retrieval when they are speaking. It is not a question of not knowing the words; one student says she has forgotten the word for swimming which she has just written accurately in her written response. It seems therefore to be more that she is unused to speaking. In writing, there are many more examples of full sentences, particularly more examples of the opinion + infinitive verbs structure that has been an explicit learning focus, than in speaking. When speaking, sentences are often broken. Students have things to say but their linguistic resources are quickly stretched and they automatically resort to English. These spoken data do concur with what the teacher says about the opportunities students typically have for speaking, predominantly their spoken presentations on each project they complete. Most students typically give their project presentations in English, despite encouragement from the teacher to use the target language:

"They were encouraged to present in the TL …a lot of the students didn't feel quite brave enough to present in the TL.."

This means that students typically insert individual TL words and phrases into their English discourse: "…most of them were able to recall individual words and share those with the group and pronounce them… but rarely students were able to link full sentences together so it kept kind of tended to be words and phrases…"

This may help to explain why they resorted so quickly to English, when they completed their speaking tasks.

However, more able students did seem able to sustain their target language use during presentations: "higher ability kids like Sven and Ivan were staying in French the whole time"

As well as the nature of the speaking opportunities themselves, it is clear that students in the LF sessions spend more time on reading and writing than they do on speaking and listening:

*Do you think that you get better and writing or speaking or listening or reading in here?*

"Probably writing, because we do some work at writing, and like I'm doing something different than other pupils because we currently are doing like higher level work for next year for Year 9 and I learn a lot of writing and reading and yeah"
*Because maybe you're not then using it every day…*

"Yeah, I only use it like twice a week"

Again there is the sense that they are not in the habit of speaking regularly in French. When prompted and encouraged to continue Michelle manages to recall and produce fairly accurately two short, but complete sentences recalling her written responses, indicating that she knows the language but is unused to producing it orally. The teacher confirms this: "with LF the big problem is that they don't get enough oral input in this year"

#### 4.1.3 Word choice in written answers

Looking carefully at the written output from students, it is noticeably different from that of students within a conventional classroom. Students researching and producing language autonomously in this class often rely on computer-based online resources, including online translators such as google translate. The effect of this can be simply that learners select the less usual, but equally valid, option, for example 'je vis' for I live rather than 'j'habite'. We also see examples of direct renderings with English phraseology that are correct, but not necessarily idiomatic, for example 'Mi nombre es' rather than the more usual 'Me llamo'. In the absence of direct teaching, and without the support of a mentor, this is inevitable. The teacher certainly feels that this is a factor that limits learner progress:

"Negative progress is frequently a consequence of over-dependence on google translate rather than other language software, when students prepare their research presentations."

#### 4.1.4 Accuracy, spelling and punctuation

Despite the fact that students appear to be more comfortable producing written work, and that they produce longer, more complete sentences compared to their spoken utterances, there is also a high level of inaccurate spelling, and many examples where spelling is inconsistent within one short piece. One reason for this may be that students' written work is not the focus of rigorous marking and follow up within this group. It could also be the case that, as student word-process the majority of their work, they are not in the habit of attending to spelling, accents or apostrophes in the same way as students who hand-write their work. It's possible therefore that word-processing has led to some bad habits. This, and the other aspects of linguistic progress explored here are elements that require further examination in the main study.

#### 4.1.5 Individual students

It is worth noting that, at the outset, it was not expected that the students within the LF class would continue with a language the following year for GCSE. However, at the time of the study, five of the 14 students' stated intention was to continue with either French or Spanish to GCSE. Uptake at GCSE, as an indicator of engagement, is significant. Furthermore, of the nine students not aiming to continue with a language, seven had SEN.

When asked about learner progress, the LF teacher highlighted Michelle, who had been particularly struggling within mainstream French classes:

"She started French and was refusing to respond in assessments, refusing to write anything down, and quite quickly we thought that this is coz she can't but it was that she was in revolt and didn't really want to…"

By the time of my pilot study, the teacher reported: "she's making more progress than we've seen her make in Y7 or in mainstream French before she did the LF" - Michelle was one of the students who'd chosen to continue French for GCSE.
For Michelle's progress, the Language Futures approach appears to compare favourably with conventional classroom teaching. I turn now to a more detailed comparison of the two approaches.

### 4.2 Comparing Language Futures and conventional classroom-based learning

In both questionnaires and interviews, students were asked to give and justify their preference for Language Futures or their classroom-based language learning, as they had all learnt French following a conventional classroom-based approach in Year 7 and continued to do so for one lesson per week in Year 8, alongside their Language Futures lessons. Whilst a simple count of positive and negative references to both Language Futures and classroom-based learning reveals a clear preference for Language Futures, there were mixed preferences, with a few students liking both, some liking neither, and two preferring classroom-based language lessons.

Probing students' perceptions of how well they made progress in both approaches was less illuminating in this pilot group. When asked whether they remembered new words better in Language Futures or their classroom-based learning, they felt it was about the same. The choice and freedom about the words to learn within Language Futures, and therefore presumably the greater the personal connection to the words did not appear to enhance their salience, which was a surprise. Having said that, the size of the cohort precludes any generalisation about this, and it will be one element to follow up in the main study.

It was difficult, in fact, to discern students' understanding of language learning processes from their responses. When asked about how they learnt, they focused much more on the physical resources they used, describing how they enjoyed using computers and producing printed work for their folder portfolios. However, one student hinted at one difference between LF and classroom-based learning:

"Is the way you learn different as well? The kind of like for example how you get the words into your head, how would that happen in a normal languages lesson, compared to in a language futures lesson?

You don't really get folders and you don't normally like print them out or revise them you just do the lesson and that's then done for."

There's the inference here that, for this student, the progress from one lesson to the next in the conventional languages classroom is not allowing sufficient time for mastery, but that the more open structure of an LF lesson enables students to revisit and recap what they have learnt. There is much more than needs to be explored with respect to this in the main study.

The two students who expressed a preference for classroom-based language learning appeared to prefer the security of a more structured approach, saying it was good "that we was [sic] learning a

lot." The games they played and the large amount of work they were given to do were two aspects that contributed to this positive view of classroom-based learning. The evidence that not all students respond positively to a more self-directed learning approach is found elsewhere in empirical research on project- and task-based learning (Beckett, 2006, Kirschner et al., 2006). Student preferences are clearly affected by the quality of their classroom language learning experiences, and in such a small study, likely to vary from individual to individual. One student said of her French classroom learning: "I did not enjoy anything because there was no work and we had to copy out of a book. The teacher was very mean." Contrasting this with her experience in LF: "I am happy to be in this French lesson because I learn a lot."

Despite the variety of opinions in this pilot study, some of the reasons replicate those of other students in previous Language Futures cohorts. It will be important to build a bigger picture now by aggregating the views of Language Futures students in other schools.

## 4.3 Factors that impact learner engagement in the Language Futures approach

I coded all of the data twice. Initially I coded thematically, broadening the list of themes as they unfolded from the data. I then coded every utterance that expressed either a positive or negative attitude, regardless of theme. I was then able to explore individual themes, comparing the positive and negative comments related to each. As mentioned previously, the role of the 'counting' was to highlight patterns in the data and to indicate categories worthy of closer exploration. One example of the interplay between descriptive and micro-textual analysis was in the area of learner engagement in the Language Futures approach. Creating a matrix coding query to bring together all the positive and negative coded comments that related to learner engagement enabled me to identify factors that are influential in students' motivation. For example, four students mention liking to learn language**s** (plural) in LF. As one student says:

"I like learn French and stuff and the other people do other languages and like I hear like what they are learning so I can learn as well, like so I can learn multiple languages at one time, and I don't know, like for example teacher explains something to them and then I can hear it and then I can learn as well kind of and then I remember it."

In the analysis that follows I explore the main factors that impact learner engagement, comparing positive and negative attitudes.

### 4.2.1 Choice

Choice emerged as an aspect of LF that is strongly associated with learner engagement. There were no negative comments directly related to choice. As previous studies have suggested, it was more than just being able to choose the language to learn. The table below summarises the different aspects of choice mentioned by teacher and students.

**Table 5: Choice within Language Futures**

| Aspect of choice | Example from the data |
|---|---|
| Language choice | "Languages futures you learn more than that, you can learn like any, but you get to choose which language you'd prefer like Spanish or German or something like that…" |
| Task choice | "She's got a lot more autonomy over her own tasks"<br><br>"I've found a few other things that they like so that if you can produce a really fantastic project on this topic you can help me choose the next topic, I'll give you a list of five different things and you can take ownership over which one we look at next"<br><br>"The biggest way that we reward is in them being allowed to choose the next task that they have in that lesson so they can suggest to me what they want to do next which sometimes works quite well, having that choice suits them" |
| Micro-topic choice | "So they took music, so that would be whichever element of music they were most interested in in their own country, fashion within their own country and a cultural festival of their choosing"<br><br>"It's more there's more activities than like normal lessons"<br>OK – what kind of more activities? What different types of things do you get to do?<br>"Like different topics like Olympics topics and other topics like like if there's like oh what was it we learnt about I forgot what else we were learning about…" |
| Moment-by-moment choices within independent project-based learning | "Behaviour is greatly improved through project based learning, with students working individually on their chosen language, so in some cases, individuals make more progress due to improved engagement."<br><br>"She can move between tasks a lot more quickly and she doesn't have to sit and listen" |
| Curriculum choice (for the teacher) | "Because there is that fluidity with LF and you can base it around the learners and what they want to achieve" |
| Pedagogical choice (for the teacher) | "The some that I know would be incentivised by it, when they receive like verbal feedback I might say, were if you were to go back and think about adding an opinion in there or a reason with a connective you could reach up to the next level then I do it like that, I do have those conversations" |

It is interesting to note that, at the time of this study, the students within the LF programme in the pilot school actually had a rather restricted choice of language. After its re-launch they had been able to choose either French, Spanish, or to improve a home language. The student comments however suggest that there is a magnified positive impression of choice here, or put another way, that a little choice goes a long way. Another example of this is with topic choice. The fact that students choose their focus within the broader topic e.g. The Olympics seems to build the impression that they engage in more activities than in normal lessons, whereas in fact they do a lot of the same sort of activity i.e. internet-based research.

The moment-by-moment choices students are free to make when working independently on a research project have a positive impact on behaviour, it seems. The ability to choose your own pace that the more open structure of LF learning allows seems to alleviate tensions that, for some students, previously resulted in poor behaviour.

Finally, there are indications that, when the teacher is free to choose the topic and has control over other aspects of pedagogy, such as whether to target particular students work for linguistic improvement or just to praise their efforts, s/he has the sense of meeting learners' needs more effectively.

### 4.2.2 Agency (Autonomy)

Given the positive impact of choice, it might seem surprising that there were twice as many negative comments (nine in total) relating to autonomy, as there were positive (four in total). Agency is the capacity of someone to act in a given situation. In this context, it refers to the capacity of learners to learn. Autonomy relates to the extent to which learners direct their own learning effectively. All of the data about autonomy were provided by the teacher in this pilot. This is interesting in itself as students were clearly conscious of choice but did not demonstrate an awareness that they were learning more independently. The positive comments highlight the elements that support learner autonomy, in this study, these were the computer facilities, the nature of the tasks, and, when available, the mentors. In the view of the teacher, mentors enhance autonomy because their role is not to instruct but to support: "if there are mentors there just to facilitate rather than to tell that is productive."

However, in spite of the positives, the teacher identified clearly that learner autonomy was problematic in this group. She acknowledges that a significant number of the students (seven of 14) have SEN, and struggle with the demands of independent learning: "a lot of them have got very low literacy skills and they do struggle with researching independently" but also believes that it is just as much about attitude than ability, ultimately. The initiative, she notes, resides most often with her as the teacher, or the mentor: "I think that quite often they're only working at any pace at all because they're getting a lot of pushing and nagging from me." There is the suggestion that students prefer the easier option: "They'd rather you did it for them and with them than learn the independence synthesis skills required to progress alone."

A further difficulty highlighted was that, despite the open-ended nature of the project-based learning, students who did develop more autonomy were then a little held back:

"The students who do take on that ownership and move up themselves …are then slightly capped because a lot of our activities are focused on a specific context as well so they can only apply their language within that context and we almost need to encounter a new context for them to be challenged and stretched even further."

At this stage, however, the teacher was operating the LF group almost entirely without any mentor involvement. This may well have been a limiting factor. More able students within the group might have been able to extend their learning to a new context with the facilitation of a mentor.

Overall, the indication is that, students within the LF approach, do not automatically develop successful independent learning skills. IT resources and a project-based learning approach are important to their agency, but so too are the development of research skills, the support of mentors,

and the willingness of students to take the initiative.

#### 4.2.3 Project-based learning

Many of the negative comments relating to PBL overlapped, unsurprisingly, with those concerned with autonomy, i.e. the difficulties learners had with independent research skills. The positive comments overlapped overwhelmingly with the comments relating to choice: "the students have greater freedom within their own languages to explore the key ideas." In terms of additional positive aspects, the teacher highlights the flexibility within PBL to have one umbrella focus that can be relevant to all of the different languages: "I've tried to choose task-based learning products that are applicable to all my countries." In addition, the way that a sustained project focus leads to a building up of work is seen as beneficial:

"They like having something that is cumulative that they can add to each week. I think it helps their sense of ownership because eventually they're building up something bigger for their folder."

This is echoed by comments from students, who appreciate the tangible evidence of their work that the folders facilitate:

"And why are the folders good?
Coz you can store all your stuff and like print all the like good work you've done to show your teachers."

The teacher goes as far as to say that the organisation of learning through projects is the factor that impacts most positively on learner engagement:

"The most valuable in terms of engagement I would probably say mm yeah task-based learning so long as the task is matched to their interests where possible."

Having said that, she also acknowledges that she needs to use short projects, lasting a maximum of one week:

"But three lessons is my absolute maximum for a task-based learning project because they lose the engagement at about two to three."

#### 4.2.3 Additional factors

As highlighted earlier in this report, Language Futures has five core features. It is a core aim of the study to explore the impact of these, as well as identify any other, features that significantly impact on the LF approach. Within the pilot school the features of School as basecamp and Building a learning community remained rather under-developed. This, in turn, had an impact on the role of Teacher as designer and facilitator. All data references to these features came from the teacher interview and teacher questionnaire.

In the view of the teacher, the majority of students had not shown evidence that they were actively pursuing language learning beyond the classroom. Initially the teacher had set up the expectation that learners would continue to work on their projects at home, adding to them and practising for their presentation to the group. At the time of the study, towards the end of the school year, the teacher says that her expectations have lowered: "I've tried but I think I petered off with that because of the lack of success really." This lack of success seems to be a lack of engagement from students:

"So the majority of students don't submit their homework and don't show enthusiasm when you explain what they're doing outside of the learning that happens in the lesson."

The teacher acknowledges that her approach to learning beyond the lesson has been quite mainstream, however. She has referred to it as homework, and in her own view hasn't gone as far as she might have done to help students conceptualise home learning differently: "I haven't tapped into that, I haven't tapped into kind of incentivising fun home learning."

She recognises that a minority of learners has shown an active interest in where their language fits in beyond school: "some will say I've heard this walking in town miss or this word is something I've seen somewhere else they do make the connection." She is positive about the potential that further development of School as basecamp could deliver, particularly "if they [students] were then set home learning tasks to do in kind of coordination with their families then that could be really valuable."

This observation overlaps with the area of Building a learning community, too, another aspect that was not at the forefront of this pilot school's model of LF. In this respect, there were two main difficulties; the involvement of parents and the commitment of mentors.

By the time of the study, mentor involvement had dwindled to almost nothing, so unsurprisingly, there were no student comments relating to them. However, according to the teacher, at the start of the programme the mentors' impact was extremely positive. The LF students really valued having the individualised support from older, native speaker students. It made them feel special and was, in the LF teachers' opinion, pivotal in the positive behavioural and motivational changes that she witnessed with the group. As she reflected in the teacher questionnaire:

- Where a successful relationship has been built and there is routine attendance, a student has achieved heightened progress in their LF language, as well as better behaviour and attitude to learning. This occurred in our first 6 week attempt at LF in Dec 2015- Feb 2016.

However, when the commitment from many of the mentors waned and without the personalised support with their chosen LF language, the motivation and behaviour of the Year 8 students deteriorated, and removals increased again. According to the LF teacher, considerable negativity built up as the LF students felt let down by their mentors and the difficulties were such that the additional language LF element of the model fizzled out:

"Once those mentors were not coming and they weren't seeing a frequent second figure to guide them with that language, which often was something that I couldn't support them with at all like Urdu or Shona, so once those initially enthusiastic mentors dropped off the radar the backwards step in motivation, engagement, behaviour and progress was bigger than if we hadn't done LF altogether…"

The teacher was very clear in her view that without mentor input, progress was significantly restricted, both in terms of spoken confidence:

"I think that because of the lack of mentor input in the last week prior to the presentations a lot of the students didn't feel quite brave enough to present in the TL."

and also in terms of conceptual knowledge of the language:

"Without mentor input, and with a ratio of 1:14, students struggle to grasp grammar structures and knowledge about language fully."

As explained elsewhere in this report, parents were not aware of the Language Futures programme that their children were engaged in. Apart from the fact that the lack of parental involvement left a core feature of LF under-developed, and the teacher also felt uneasy that parents were uninformed about the programme. When asked to reflect on how positive the role of parents might have been, however, the teacher's views were mixed. On the one hand, she was not convinced that it would be easy to engage the parents:

"From my experiences already a lot of the parents of this group aren't that easy to engage with over email or through letters."

On the other hand, she did perceive the powerful impact that parental involvement could have on learner progress, particular in cases where the student is learning a heritage language:

"Their parent might well have a much higher literacy level in language so those kind of cooperative learning relationships that you could build would be really powerful I think."

An important emergent finding from this study is the inter-related nature of the core features with the LF approach. The underdevelopment of School as basecamp and the Building a learning community appears to impact negatively on the role of the Teacher as designer and facilitator. Without mentors in the programme, the teacher is less able to facilitate and tends to adopt a more directly instructional role, whilst without parental involvement the teacher may have limited expectations for learner engagement beyond the classroom. The suggestion here may be that the core features of the LF programme need to be present and where possible, as fully developed as they can be, to allow the teacher role to be fully facilitative.

### 4.4 Additional learning affordances

The impact of peer-learning did not emerge during this pilot study, and remains an area to be explored in the main study. However, the impact of learners experiencing a multi-lingual environment within the LF approach emerged as an area worthy of further exploration.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

### 5.1 Methodological implications for the main research study

Yin (2003) argues that, all things being equal, it is always preferable to have a multiple-case rather than single case approach. It was always intention to include multiple case studies in the main research study. The aim of this single case study pilot was, as previously outlined, both an opportunity to trial the main research instruments, and to produce initial findings that may contribute to the main study. In the previous chapter I reviewed the pilot study findings. In chapter 3 I referred to certain aspects of the study's methodology that might require further development

for the main study. As a result, I describe here the changes I will make to the research design.

### 5.1.2 Research methods

Whilst overall I was happy with the research strategy adopted for the pilot study there are aspects that could be improved in its design, both macro and micro elements. The depth of rich data that the pilot study generated and the time needed for its analysis indicated that I should reduce the number of schools involved in the main study to four: two in-school LF model schools and two extra-curricular LF schools. In terms of the research schedule, I plan to collect student questionnaire data in advance of a school visit, using the analysis to select students for semi-structured interviews. The student questionnaires themselves will be redesign to incorporate mostly open response questions focused more closely on the Language Futures approach, or example:

- Why did you choose your LF language?
- Describe a typical LF lesson.
- How do you go about learning new words?
- How do you learn how to pronounce the words?
- What helps you learn best?
- What tasks / activities do you do most of?
- Do you have an equal balance of listening, speaking, reading and writing?
- How is language learning different in LF from classroom language learning?
- How do you feel about your progress in your LF language?
- Who helps you learn?
- When do you learn?

The individual interviews will be conducted with a small selection of students from each school, and will use the questionnaire answers as a springboard.

Finally, the speaking tasks will be carried out with mentors rather than with the researcher, with the aim of producing the most relaxed, naturalistic responses from students.

**Table 6: Summary of changes to research design**

| Aspect of research strategy | Change proposed |
|---|---|
| Research design | Reduction in number of schools |
| Research schedule | Questionnaires in advance<br>Analysis leads to selection of same for interviews based on suggestions in their responses that might prove fruitful to further inquiry |
| Research instruments | Student questionnaires<br>Open response questions more closely focused on the Language Futures approach and experiences |
| | Student interviews – more structured questions<br>Continue to use the questionnaires and examination of portfolio work as a way to relax students and provide a natural springboard to the interview questions |
| | Speaking tasks<br>Mentors to conduct these instead of researcher<br>Students to complete in pairs rather than individually |

### 5.1.1 Action Research

In the course of conducting the pilot study, I reflected on the nature and purpose of the research and the overarching research strategy. Action research is an approach that has improvement as its goal, and involves an intervention (Robson, 2002). Whilst this study focuses on an approach, an innovation rather than an intervention, there are aspects to the study that nevertheless conform to the spirit and intention of action research. For example, even within this very small-scale pilot study, the collaboration with the LF teacher was very clearly 'encouraging practical deliberation and self-reflection on the part of the practitioners' (Zuber-Skeritt, 1996, p.4-5). However, a more detailed review of the underlying purpose of the research, with its focus on understanding rather than change, and the consequent research design features, indicated that the most appropriate research strategy was an instrumental, qualitative case study.

**Table 7: Comparing Action Research and qualitative inquiry**

| Methodological layers | | |
|---|---|---|
| Ontological | Constructivism | |
| Epistemological / Philosophical | Commitment to understanding | Commitment to change |
| Research strategy | Case study<br>(non-interventionist) | Action Research<br>(intervention +/- experiment) |
| Sampling | Purposive (other-selected) | Purposive (self-selected) |
| Key processes / general approach | Reflection | Planning – action - reflection |
| Data collection | Scheduled | Flexible / on-going |
| Data analysis | Researcher (+participant) perspective | Participant (+researcher) Perspective |
| Role of the researcher | Expert/outsider | Participant/insider |
| Findings / claims | In-depth understanding of the case<br>Contribution to the field | In-depth understanding of the case<br>Contribution to participants' professional knowledge |

However, an emic perspective and commitment to understanding all participant perspectives will allow the main study to probe and develop teacher's perceptions and will inevitably contribute to develop their thinking and practice, an aspect of this study which is of significant importance to the Association for Language Learning.

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## Appendices

## Appendix A

## Student speaking task

**Talk about this picture:**

- ✓ What is there in the picture?
- ✓ What is your opinion?
- ✓ What sports do you like / not like?
- ✓ What do you like / not like to do?
- ✓ Anything else?

# Appendix B

## Student writing task

Name:_____
School: _____
Language Futures language: _____

**1 Write about yourself (name, age, where you live, etc..)**

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.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

**2 Write about things you like and don't like.**

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**3 Write about sports and any other activities you do in your free time.**

.....
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.....
.....
.....

# Appendix C

## Student questionnaire

You are part of the Language Futures project. We would like to know what you think about it. Please answer all the questions as honestly as you can. There are **no right or wrong answers.**

You do not have to write your name if you prefer your answers to be anonymous.
Name: _____ Language Futures language: _____

In the questions that follow, please tick the **smiley face** that best matches how you feel. **Here is an example:**

**I like football:**

a lot | quite a lot ✓ | a bit | not much

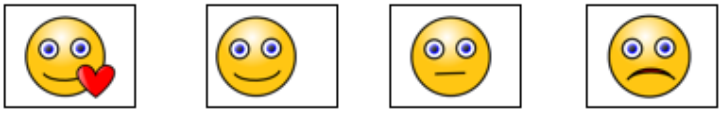
**The summer holidays should be shorter:**

agree very much | agree ✓ | disagree | disagree very much

**SECTION 1**

**1. Do you enjoy your Language Futures lessons? Please tick the face that best shows how you feel.**

a lot | quite a lot | a bit | not much



Below are more questions about your French lessons, please try to make your answers as specific as possible.

**2. What did you enjoy the most about French lessons in Year 7? Write your answer here:**

_____

_____

**3. Was there anything that you didn't enjoy about the lessons in Year 7? Write your answer here:**

_____

_____

**4. Do you prefer how you learn in Language Futures lessons or how you learn in other language lessons?**

**Please tick one of the boxes below and give a reason for your choice**

☐ **Language Futures** ☐ **Other language lessons**

_____

_____

_____

**SECTION 2**

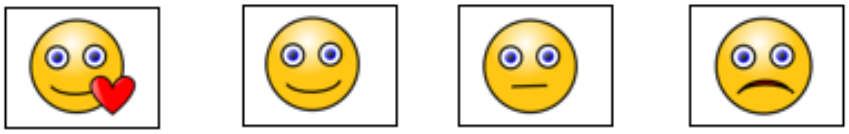
Now think about some of the things you have been learning to do in your Language Futures language. Please tick the face that best matches how you feel.

**1) I can SAY some sentences to describe myself.**

Very well | Quite well | OK | Not very well

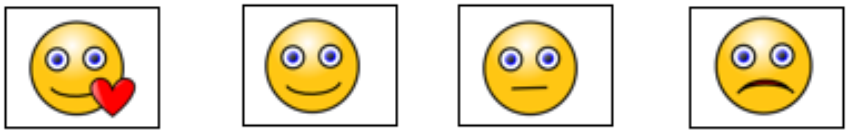
**2) I can WRITE a few sentences to describe myself.**

Very well | Quite well | OK | Not very well



**3) I can UNDERSTAND what I HEAR when someone speaks in the language.**

Very well | Quite well | OK | Not very well

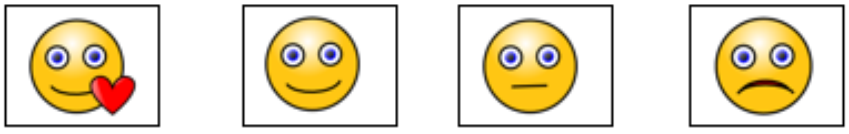


**4) I can UNDERSTAND a short text in the language that I READ to myself.**

Very well | Quite well | OK | Not very well

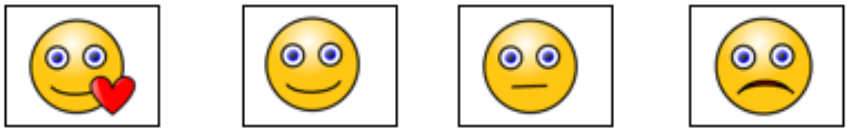
**5) I can REMEMBER the meaning of the words that I have met.**

Very well | Quite well | OK | Not very well



**6) I know how to put together words to make sentences.**

Very well | Quite well | OK | Not very well

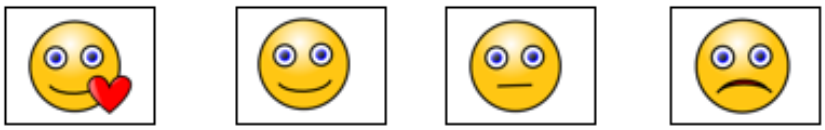


**SECTION 3**

**1. How well do you think you will be able to do the following things by the end of your Language Futures course this year?**
**Tick a face!**

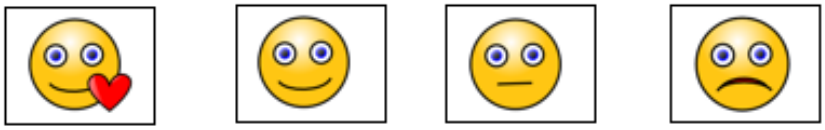
**a) Use lots of different words to talk about things that I do in my free time**

Very well | Quite well | OK | Not very well



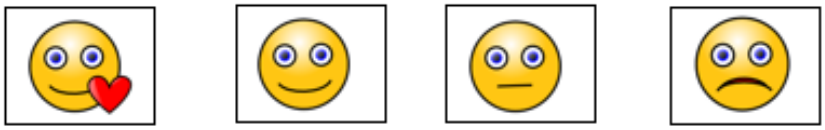
**b) Write without making too many mistakes.**

Very well | Quite well | OK | Not very well



**c) Have a conversation.**

Very well | Quite well | OK | Not very well

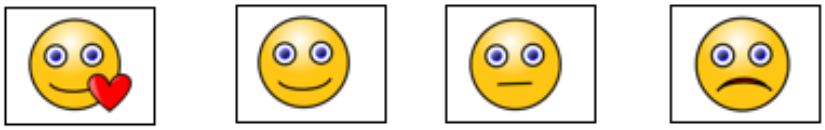


**d) Read a short text and understand it.**

Very well | Quite well | OK | Not very well

**2. How well do you think you will do in language learning next year?**

Very well | Quite well | OK | Not very well

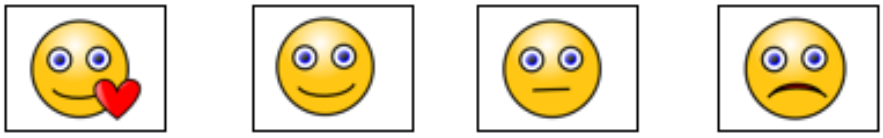


**SECTION 4**

Please say whether you agree or disagree with these statements. Tick a smiley face!

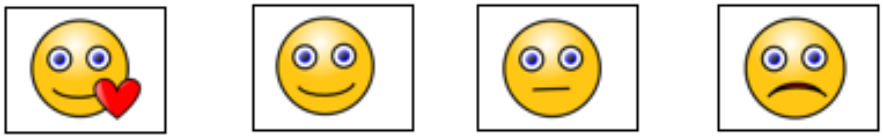
**a) Learning languages is important.**

Agree very much | Agree | Disagree | Disagree very much



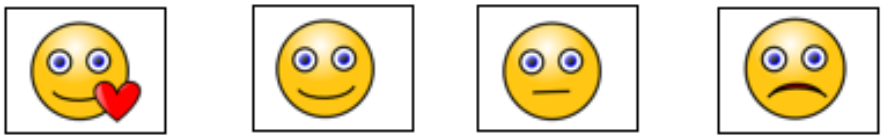
**b) Learning languages is fun.**

Agree very much | Agree | Disagree | Disagree very much



**c) Learning languages will help me get a good job.**

Agree very much | Agree | Disagree | Disagree very much

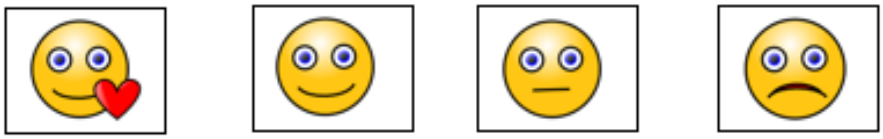


**d) Learning languages will help me if I want to travel abroad.**

Agree very much | Agree | Disagree | Disagree very much

**e) I am looking forward to carrying on learning languages next year.**

Agree very much | Agree | Disagree | Disagree very much



**Thank you!**

# Appendix D

## Teacher questionnaire

**Languages Futures Teacher questionnaire**

**1.** Give details about your **Language Futures students** by completing the table below (adding rows as necessary):

| Student number | Initials | Age | Gender | LF language | LF language competence at start of programme (see codes) | Language competence in other languages (see codes) e.g. *French - I* | Additional details (optional) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | | |

| Language competence codes | |
|---|---|
| Absolute beginner | AB |
| Foundation – 1-2 years classroom-based prior learning | F |
| Intermediate – 3-4 years classroom-based prior learning | I |
| Advanced – 5+ years classroom-based prior learning | A |
| Heritage speaker with no or limited literacy | HS |
| Heritage speaking with some literacy | HS+ |

**2.** Give details of **your group's Language Futures curriculum** by completing the table below:
For this question include what you typically cover in the Language Futures curriculum, rather than judging the extent to which students have mastered this knowledge and these skills.

| 1 Grammar / Language structures | 2 Vocabulary areas | 3 Knowledge about language | 4 Language learning skills | 5 Other relevant curriculum elements (not mentioned in 1-4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

**3.** Give details of **how you assess students' learning** in the Language Futures programme. Enter **Y** in each box, if applicable.
If entering Y, enter also the number of assessment opportunities there are during one academic year. ***E.g. Y [2].*** Add additional columns, as necessary.
Other boxes can be left blank. If the assessment arrangements are the same for all LF languages offered, then enter '**All languages**' in the first cell.

| LF language | Listening | Speaking | Reading | Writing | Grammar | Vocabulary | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *E.g. Russian* | *Y[2]* | | *Y[2]* | *Y[1]* | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

**4.** Give details of **how you measure students' progress** in the Language Futures programme. Enter **Y** in each box, if applicable.
Other boxes can be left blank. If the assessment arrangements are the same for all LF languages offered, then enter '**All languages**' in the first cell.

| LF language | National Curriculum level | Common European Framework level (A1, A2) | Life after levels school-based system | Mentor feedback | Teacher feedback | Peer feedback | Student self-assessment | Computer-assisted assessment (i.e. automatic correction) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |

**5.** Give your **overall impression of your students' progress** in each of the **areas of linguistic competence** listed in the table below, when compared to your expectations of progress within conventional classroom-based learning with the same time allocation and starting point. Use the codes: **--** (slower than expected classroom-based progress), **=** (equivalent to expected classroom-based progress), **+** (faster than expected classroom-based progress).

| LF language | 1 Grammar / Language structures | 2 Vocabulary areas | 3 Knowledge about language | 4 Language learning skills | 5 Understanding (listening / reading) | 6 Production (speaking / writing) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | |

If you have indicated + or – rates of progress as compared to classroom-based learning, please give further observations and / or evidence that support these conclusions:

| Type here: |
|---|
| |

**6a.** Give details of **the main features of your Language Futures programme.** Enter **Y** in each cell, as appropriate, in response to statements 1-6.

| LF language | 1 Students choose LF language. | 2 Students have autonomy within LF sessions. | 3 Learning is task-based. | 4 There is parental involvement. | 5 There are community mentors. | 6 Students take their language learning beyond the classroom. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | |

**6b.How important are these features?**

If you have indicated **Y** to any or all of the statements 1-6 above, please give **further observations and / or evidence** that explain the **impact** of each feature on **students' language learning**.

| Type here: |
|---|
| |

**Thank you very much for your time.**
**Language Futures team**

## Appendix E

## Teacher semi-structured interview questions

**Teacher interview questions**

1. Since students have been following the Language Futures approach, what are they now able to do in their language?

2. Are there differences in the progress between students in the group? If so, how do you account for those differences?

3. Do you measure progress using a recognised assessment framework? (If so, which one? If not, why not?)

4. Overall do pupils make more or less progress in Language Futures than their expected progress in a more conventional languages classroom? How do you account for this?

5. In your view, what are the key factors that impact on the success or otherwise of the Language Futures approach?

(Follow up: how important to you believe the following to be, and why?)

i. choice of language

ii. autonomy to work at own pace in lessons

iii. task-based learning

iv. parental involvement

v. community mentors

vi. learning beyond the classroom

# Appendix F

## Coding Framework

Attitudes
- negative
- positive

Agency (Autonomy)

Community of Learning
- mentors
- parents

Engagement

Behaviour

Conventional classroom learning

LF lessons

Project-based learning

Resources

School as Basecamp

Student choice

Teacher Role