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STRATEGIC MULTILINGUAL MINDS: INSIGHTS FROM LEARNING GERMAN ON METALINGUISTIC AWARENESS AND CAREER MOTIVATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Abstract. Although previous research has explored motivation and learning strategies in second language acquisition, few studies have specifically examined how multilingual, as opposed to merely bilingual, backgrounds influence the process of learning German as an additional language. Moreover, the role of career-oriented motivation in sustaining student engagement remains underexplored, particularly in contexts where German is learned for professional advancement rather than migration or academic mobility. To address these gaps, this study investigates the dynamic interplay between multilingualism, motivation, and learning strategies among university students in Indonesia enrolled in a German language program. Adopting a convergent mixed-methods design, the research collected quantitative and qualitative data from 182 respondents through an online questionnaire combining Likert-scale items and open-ended responses across three semester cohorts. Quantitative analyses using Kruskal-Wallis, Spearman, and Pearson tests revealed that multilingual backgrounds did not directly enhance German proficiency; however, digital multilingual practices were significantly associated with greater autonomous engagement in German learning. Thematic analysis of qualitative data further identified flexible learning strategies that integrated audio-visual media, social interaction, cross-linguistic reflection, and the emerging use of AI-based tools such as chatbots for independent speaking practice. Career awareness emerged as a significant motivational factor shaping students' engagement, indicating that career-oriented goals are pivotal in sustaining their commitment to developing German language competence. These findings highlight the importance of leveraging multilingual and digital literacies to design more purposeful, career-relevant approaches to learning German as a foreign language.

Keywords: career awareness; learning strategy; metalinguistic awareness; motivation; multilingualism.

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Introduction

In foreign language learning, learners with multilingual backgrounds bring different linguistic repertoires, learning strategies, and learning experiences to the classroom (Attaviriyapap, 2016; Ardiyani & Rofi'ah, 2021). Linguistic diversity is increasingly evident with the support of digital access that connects anyone from any part of the world (Martyn, 2022; Tauchid et al., 2022). With most learners born in a diglossic environment, multilingualism in the Indonesian educational setting has become an inevitability that cannot be avoided. It is for this reason that students' interaction with further language learning, such as German, will definitely be affected by their perception of languages they have already learned, including how they acquired those languages.

In the European domain, where significant research on multilingualism has been conducted, the implementation of multilingual pedagogy has been shown to enhance motivation (Costache et al., 2022), develop metalinguistic awareness (Babušytė & Daunorienė, 2022), and encourage students to become more involved in the learning process (Forbes et al., 2021). Similarly, translanguaging as a manifestation of the multilingual approach has been recognized as a powerful resource for meaning-making (García & Wei, 2014) and forming a positive academic self-concept (Gantefort & Maahs, 2020). Unfortunately, various positive implications that emerge from multilingual pedagogy revealed by these studies have not been widely explored by Indonesian researchers, particularly in German instruction as a foreign language.

To date, research in Indonesia has focused more on investigating the reasons why students use their mother tongue, often in the form of code-mixing or code-switching, to understand German language material (Dalle, 2015; Khusnia & Wijayati, 2021), rather than promoting the implementation of interlingual comparison in terms of phonology, vocabulary, and grammar in the classroom. Contrastive analyses conducted by several academics also tend to stand outside the pedagogical realm (Rahmawati, 2010; Baginda, 2011). On the other hand, how a multilingual background influences the foreign language learning process they are engaged in has not received much attention.

Similarly, research on whether students' awareness of their career prospects after completing their studies has implications for their learning activity has not been adequately explored. Therefore, this study investigates the relationship between multilingualism, motivation, and learning strategies among Indonesian students enrolled in a German language programme. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do students' multilingual backgrounds influence their motivation to learn German?
2. What learning strategies emerge from their prior language learning experiences?
3. How does awareness of career prospects shape their language learning engagement?

By exploring these questions, this study aims to contribute strategic insights into how multilingual backgrounds and career awareness shape motivation to learn German. The findings can also be used to design more contextualised and relevant learning strategies for Indonesian students. Furthermore, this study reinforces the integration between foreign language education and professional competency development.

Literature Review

Multilingualism & Metalinguistic Awareness

Multilingualism is conceptualized as using several languages within communities and by individuals, whether at the territorial, institutional, or personal level (Khan, 2018). Concretely, this can be seen in Switzerland with its official recognition of four national languages (Khan, 2018), in Singapore through its institutional recognition of multilingualism (Zein, 2019), and in individuals who use various languages at home, in education, and at work (Zaunbauer in Khan, 2018). At the personal level, multilingualism is closely related to metalinguistic awareness: the ability to reflect on and manipulate language structures. In line with the Bilingual Advantage Hypothesis (Bialystok,

2001), research shows that multilingual individuals are more adept at identifying grammatical patterns, managing linguistic variation, and developing flexible analytical skills as described in the Dynamic Model of Multilingualism (Herdina & Jessner, 2002).

However, many of these findings are rooted in the European context, where learners generally have direct contact with the language they are learning. The situation in Indonesia is different because it is diglossic: Indonesian functions as the national language, regional languages remain alive in communities, while English dominates as a global lingua franca (Hamka, 2022; Tauchid et al., 2022; Ntou, 2024). This constellation results in complex cross-linguistic transfer dynamics, which, on the one hand, can aid in understanding the grammatical structure of German (Dalle, 2015; Khusnia & Wijayati, 2021), but then, can hinder vocabulary acquisition (Ardiyani & Rofi'ah, 2021). Thus, multilingualism is not always advantageous, and its use in German language learning in Indonesia remains relatively underresearched.

Furthermore, the metalinguistic benefits of multilingualism are determined by language typology, linguistic ecology, and socio-cultural conditions. Structurally close languages encourage positive transfer, while typological distance can cause interference (Blom et al., 2019; Chai & Bao, 2023; Kepinska et al., 2023). In addition, the status and prestige of languages also determine the extent to which linguistic repertoires are mobilised. Global or instructional languages tend to dominate (Köpke & Genevskaja-Hanke, 2018; Roncevic, 2024), while local languages are vulnerable to marginalisation (Garraffa et al., 2020). This suggests that multilingualism presents benefits and challenges, ranging from increased grammatical awareness to the risk of additional cognitive load. Examining these dynamics in the Indonesian context is important for revealing how metalinguistic awareness is formed and how it relates to motivation and strategies for learning foreign languages, particularly German.

L2 Learning Motivation

Multilingual learners cannot separate the use of cognitive skills and linguistic resources from their level of motivation. This means that motivation

determines the intensity of effort and how learners mobilise their language repertoire and metacognitive strategies. In theory, motivation is viewed along two axes, namely purpose (integrative vs. instrumental) and origin (intrinsic vs. extrinsic), but these categories often overlap and depend heavily on context (Busse & William, 2010; Riemer, 2016; Thompson, 2020). Integrative motivation is effective in environments oriented towards direct experience, as it encourages deep engagement and long-term proficiency (Hong & Ganapathy, 2017; Shan, 2024; Suliman et al., 2024), while instrumental motivation is more functional and prone to losing its staying power if not supported by intrinsic motivation (Sadik, 2025). Hence, previous research results need to be viewed with caution. For example, a study by Krüsemann & Graham (2024) showed that for German language learners in the UK neither integrative nor instrumental orientation predicted continued learning; what was more decisive were expectations of success and public perceptions of the language. This indicates that macro factors (language status, public image, cultural contact) can overshadow the influence of certain types of motivation.

Although there have been no comprehensive reports in Indonesia, research findings show that social opportunities and the media condition a similar pattern, namely, motivation. Weckerles' study (2015) highlights the selection mechanism for professionals in Germany, whereas Kristianto et al. (2025) show how social media fosters social-extrinsic and instrumental orientation and supports autonomous learning. These findings emphasize the need to view motivation contextually, not merely categorizing its types but exploring how motivation interacts with learning strategies, language repertoires, and public narratives. In other words, motivation research must move from describing orientations to analysing processes, that is, how motivation mediates strategy choices, repertoire use, and learning persistence in specific socio-cultural conditions. This topic will be discussed further in the subsection on learning strategies.

Multilingual Learning Strategies

Multilingual learners apply diverse and adaptive learning strategies, ranging from independent practice, utilization of digital technology, interaction

with native speakers, to self-evaluation and seeking feedback (Lee & Mori, 2020; Barrot, 2021; Noprival et al., 2025). They also often share experiences with fellow learners, enriching collaborative learning methods (Lee & Mori, 2020). Unlike monolingual speakers, their broader linguistic repertoire allows them to compare languages (Chłopek, 2018); utilize positive transfer (Lorenz & Siemund, 2019), and adjust their approach reflectively (Razei & Hashim, 2014). These strategies demonstrate that multilingual learners are disciplined and more flexible in optimizing resources to master foreign languages.

Nevertheless, most research related to German language learning still focuses on monolingual or bilingual contexts, even though multilingual learners often employ additional strategies such as cross-language comparison and translanguaging (Behrend, 2016; Bredthauer, 2019; Přeřrátilová, 2023). This approach allows for fully applying language repertoires for meaning-making and metalinguistic reflection (García & Wei, 2014). Although many Indonesian scholars promote translanguaging as a pedagogical approach, there is still little empirical evidence on how German learners use it. Given that German grammar and vocabulary are significant challenges (Afifah & Widodo, 2015; Ardiyani & Rofi'ah, 2021), it is important to examine whether learners are adapting new strategies, including through digital technology or AI-based practices, to meet the typological demands of the language.

Furthermore, three gaps need to be bridged. First, most multilingual excellence models originate from a European context and have not adequately considered the complexity of the diglossia situation in Indonesia, where English, which is typologically closer to German, can be used as a bridge language. Second, the professional dimension of motivation for learning German in Indonesia has been underexplored, even though career reasons are a dominant factor. Third, notwithstanding that translanguaging has been discussed extensively in theory, learners' perspectives on its application have rarely been studied. Filling this gap is important because German is studied in Indonesia primarily for professional mobility. Understanding how motivation, multilingual repertoires, and strategies interact will help design relevant, contextualised learning that supports learner autonomy.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a convergent mixed-methods design, which enabled the integration of quantitative and qualitative data collected simultaneously. This design was chosen to provide a broad understanding of multilingual learners' motivation and strategies and in-depth insights into their perceptions. Quantitative data offered measurable patterns of motivation, strategy use, and language practices, while qualitative responses enriched the analysis with context-specific explanations (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Sharma et al., 2023). Both strands were analysed independently and later merged during the interpretation stage to examine whether they are mutually favourable or contrary (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Participants and Sampling

Participants were undergraduate students enrolled in a German Language Education program at a state university in Indonesia. The sample consisted of 182 students across three cohorts: Semester 1 ($n = 64$), Semester 3 ($n = 65$), and Semester 7 ($n = 53$). They ranged in age from 18 to 23 years, with 142 females and 40 males. Students in Semester 5 were excluded due to their mandatory off-campus internship. By incorporating students from early, middle, and advanced stages, this multi-cohort approach captures a broader developmental trajectory of motivation and anxiety, offering a more representative and nuanced analysis of how career aspirations and linguistic confidence evolve throughout the academic journey.

All reported multilingual repertoires consisted of Indonesian, a regional language (e. g., Javanese, Sundanese), and English, with German as an additional language learned at the university. Convenience sampling was employed due to accessibility and curriculum consistency across cohorts. While this sampling technique allows for insights into the target population, it limits the generalizability of the findings to broader contexts (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).

Data Collection

Data were collected using an online structured questionnaire that combined Likert-scale items and open-ended questions. Aligned with the research questions, the instrument contained 30 items developed based on an extensive literature review. Indicators regarding multilingual background were developed from the concept of multilingual pedagogy according to Hufeisen (2018) and Haukås et al. (2021). Indicators related to learning strategies refer to Lee & Mori (2020) & Bredthauer (2019), as well as indicators of career awareness and class participation adapted from Ballweg et al. (2013) and Lent & Brown (2019). A 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) was used for closed items. At the same time, open-ended questions invited participants to describe their linguistic repertoires and their learning strategies qualitatively. In addition, the instrument underwent expert review by three applied linguistics scholars to ensure content validity (Cresswell & Guetterman, 2019).

Table 1

Mapping of Research Questions, Constructs, and Analysis

Research Question	Key Constructs	Question number	Analysis Method
1. How do students' multilingual backgrounds influence their motivation to learn German?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linguistic repertoires (home, peer, community, social media, internet) 	1-4 (LS) 5-9 (OE)	Descriptive statistics; Kruskal-Wallis (background vs comprehension); Pearson correlation (range of languages & modes of use in social media); Thematic coding of open responses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivation 	10-13 (LS)	Spearman correlation (motivation & social media engagement)
2. What learning strategies emerge from their prior language experiences?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explicit language comparison (phonetics, lexicon, grammar) 	14-16 (LS) 17-18 (OE)	Descriptive statistics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Translanguaging practices 	19-20 (LS)	Descriptive statistics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other strategies 	21-22 (OE)	Thematic coding of open responses

Research Question	Key Constructs	Question number	Analysis Method
3. How does awareness of career prospects shape their engagement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program choice & career perception (related to confidence and anxiety) 	23–26 (LS)	Spearman correlation (study orientation & career aspirations)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom engagement strategies (preparation, collaboration, response to feedback) 	27–30 (LS)	Spearman correlation (across students' learning habits)

*) LS: Likert-scale items
OE: Open-ended items

Ethical Consideration

Data were collected during the odd semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. As this study involved human participants, the protocol was reviewed by the Ethics Committee of the Directorate of Research and Community Service at Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta to ensure compliance with international ethical standards. In accordance with the 2016 CIOMS Guidelines, the committee granted ethical approval (No: T/1.1/UN34.9/PT.01.04/2025).

Informed Consent

Recruitment was done by posting notices in the classroom and using institutional mailing lists. Prior to their involvement, the students were given information sheets outlining the objectives of the study, the procedures involved, possible dangers and advantages, and participants' rights, such as the freedom to leave the study anytime without facing academic penalties. Written consent was obtained online.

Data Management

In order to preserve confidentiality, pseudonyms (for example, R30) were assigned to replace any personal identifiers during coding. All information was kept in a secure database that could be accessed by only the lead researchers.

Following standard procedures for data protection, all data will be kept for five years following publication and then destroyed.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS 25. Before the primary analyses, the data distribution was checked using the Shapiro–Wilk test. Since several variables did not meet the assumptions of normality, non-parametric procedures were applied when appropriate. The Kruskal–Wallis test was employed to examine the effect of students’ language backgrounds, monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual, on their German comprehension skills (see Table 1). Spearman’s rank correlation was conducted to explore associations between ordinal variables, such as the relationship between intrinsic motivation and social media language use. In addition, Pearson’s correlation was applied for variables normally distributed, such as the number of languages used online and their connection with autonomous learning practices.

Meanwhile, open-ended responses were analysed using thematic analysis. Coding was conducted in two stages: an initial round of inductive coding to identify emerging patterns, followed by deductive coding aligned with the research questions. For instance, student responses such as ‘watching films and listening to podcasts’ were categorized as audio-visual media engagement (AVM), while strategies like ‘using flashcards and sticky notes’ were coded as memorization techniques (MT). Representative quotes were subsequently selected to provide a clear and nuanced illustration of these learning strategies (LS).

Results

Drawing from the insights gained through data analysis and in accordance with the aims of this study, the findings are organized into three principal themes: (1) the multilingual profiles of learners and their significance to motivation, (2) the empowerment of prior experience in language learning, and (3) the relevance of career awareness on students’ involvement.

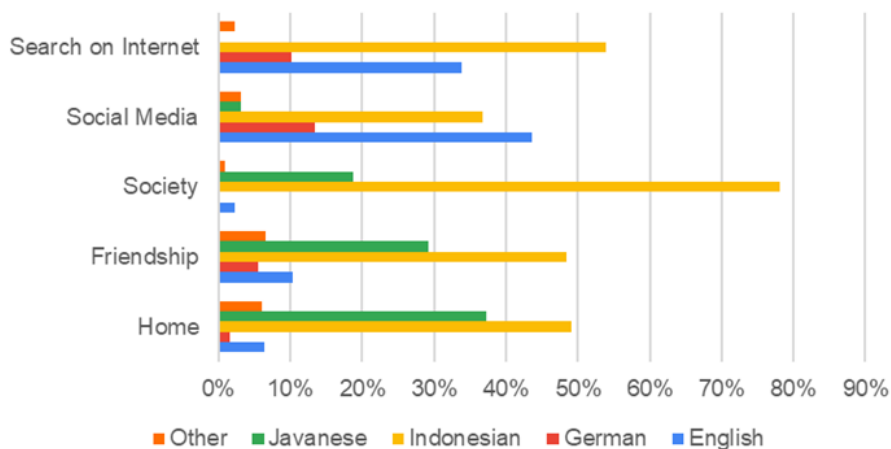
Multilingual Repertoires as Drivers of Learning Motivation

Learners interact with various languages in numerous formal and informal settings. Their multilingual practices extend from familial exchanges to broader social interactions, including participation in virtual spaces like social media platforms. To understand the learners' linguistic repertoires, the study examined which languages are used in five contexts: family, peer interactions, community engagement, social media, and online information searches. This approach allowed for assessing both the breadth of language use and the depth of multilingual engagement, distinguishing between genuine multilingualism, bilingualism, or practical monolingualism.

The frequency of language use across these domains was quantified and presented in Figure 1. While the figure is not reproduced here, it shows that Indonesian, Javanese, and English dominate learners' communicative practices. This pattern is expected: Indonesian is the national language, Javanese is widely spoken in the university region, and English is introduced from early schooling in most students' educational backgrounds. In contrast, German, the target language, appears more frequently in digital contexts, such as social media interactions (12.9%) and internet searches (10.5%). This suggests that while students are still developing German proficiency, they are beginning to incorporate it into everyday digital use.

Figure 1

Language Use in Diverse Contexts



To further assess multilingual behaviour, language use patterns were coded numerically: "1" for monolingual, "2" for bilingual, and "3" for multilingual use across the five domains. These language patterns were then analysed against German comprehension skills, operationalised into four variables: understanding lecturers' explanations in German, expressing opinions, communicating with peers, and asking questions.

The Kruskal–Wallis test was used to determine whether the dominant language profile (monolingual/bilingual/multilingual) influenced comprehension. As shown in Table 2, only the ability to understand lecturers' explanations in German approached significance ($p = 0.09$), while other variables showed no significant differences. This indicates that the number of daily languages does not strongly influence active German skills.

Table 2

Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of the Dominant Language's Impact on German Comprehension

Variable	H (statistic)	df	p-value
Understanding of the lecturer's explanation	6.48	2	0.090
Expressing opinions	2.30	2	0.512
Communicating with peers	2.12	2	0.548
Asking questions	2.53	2	0.470

In contrast, a significant positive correlation was found between the number of languages used on social media and the autonomous use of social media for learning German. The Pearson correlation ($r = 0.30$, $p = 0.026$) indicates that students who engage with multiple languages online are more likely to utilize social media as a self-directed learning tool. This suggests that multilingual digital habits are linked to increased digital literacy, which, in turn, supports independent language learning.

Table 3

Pearson Correlation Between the Number of Social Media Languages and Usage Mode

Variable	Pearson's r	p-value
Self-initiated social media use	0.30	0.026*
Social media for task completion	0.19	0.18

The following section focuses on learner initiative in identifying needs and seeking resources, particularly through digital media. Three types of behaviours were examined: social media use for fulfilling assignments, autonomous use of social media, and independent searches for supplementary learning materials. These behaviours were analysed concerning students' intrinsic motivation to learn German, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Spearman Correlation of Intrinsic Motivation with Social Media and Internet Use

Variable	Spearman's ρ	p -value
Social media for task completion	0.158	0.033*
Self-initiated social media use	0.270	0.0002*
Supplementary resources search	0.125	0.094

The results indicate a significant but weak correlation between social media use for academic tasks and intrinsic motivation ($\rho = 0.158$; $p = 0.033$), suggesting that instructor-driven activities have some positive influence. More notably, autonomous use of social media shows a stronger correlation with motivation ($\rho = 0.270$; $p = 0.0002$), indicating a close association between learner-initiated digital engagement and motivation. However, the correlation between motivation and independent material searches was not statistically significant ($\rho = 0.125$; $p = 0.094$), suggesting that not all forms of self-initiated learning are equally associated with motivational outcomes. The results of the above analysis reveal an interesting dichotomy between students' static background and dynamic behaviour. On the one hand, motivation to learn German was found to be universal, as language profile among the three groups (monolingual, bilingual, multilingual) did not show significant differences ($H(2) = 0.975$, $p = 0.614$). On the other hand, this motivation is strongly correlated with how students interact with technology independently, as mentioned above ($\rho = 0.270$; $p < 0.001$). Collectively, these results imply that students' motivation is more determined by their current digital agency and initiative than by the linguistic modalities they bring from the past.

Strategic Learning Rooted in Linguistic Memory

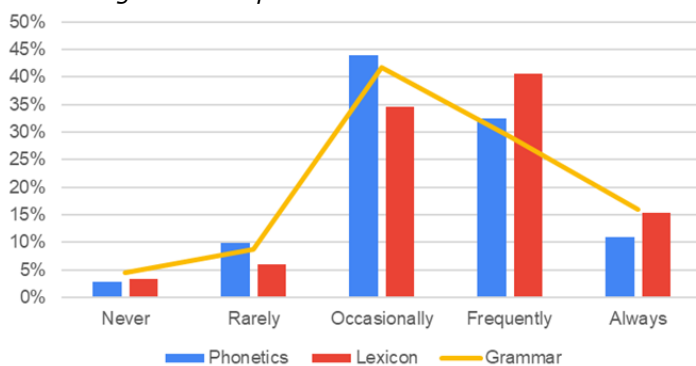
Given the limited influence of dominant languages on German language comprehension, this study further explored learners' metalinguistic awareness, specifically their conscious reflection on and comparison between German and the languages they had previously acquired. This awareness was evident in activities such as comparing phonological features, lexical items, and grammatical structures across languages (see Figure 2).

The findings indicate that comparisons in the domains of phonetics and vocabulary occur at comparable levels. However, such comparisons are not widespread: only approximately one-third of participants reported engaging in them frequently, and fewer than 15% stated that they did so very frequently. In contrast, grammatical comparison was significantly more prevalent, with over half of the respondents indicating regular engagement in this practice.

This observation is supported by qualitative data, where a large proportion of students (79.6%) identified grammar as the most challenging aspect of learning German. One respondent (R76) noted, "*Compared to English, German grammar is more complicated and extensive.*" Others cited the large number of grammatical rules requiring memorization as a significant difficulty. Despite the prominence of grammar-related challenges, vocabulary also emerged as a concern, particularly among learners at higher proficiency levels (R49 & R56) who are expected to engage with more complex and abstract topics such as *Umwelt* (environment) and *Gesundheit* (health).

Figure 2

Cross-Linguistic Comparison



In recognizing the potential of multilingualism, this study also examined how students empower their learning through translinguaging, that is, by drawing flexibly on multiple languages across academic and informal contexts. In classroom settings, taking notes in multiple languages has yet to become widespread. Only 35% of respondents indicated that they frequently or constantly engage in this practice. At the same time, the majority do not regularly implement what is known to offer cognitive and metacognitive benefits in language learning. In contrast, translinguaging practices are more apparent in students' use of social media, particularly in how they compose captions using multiple languages (see Figures 3 and 4).

Figure 3

Frequency of Student Note-Taking

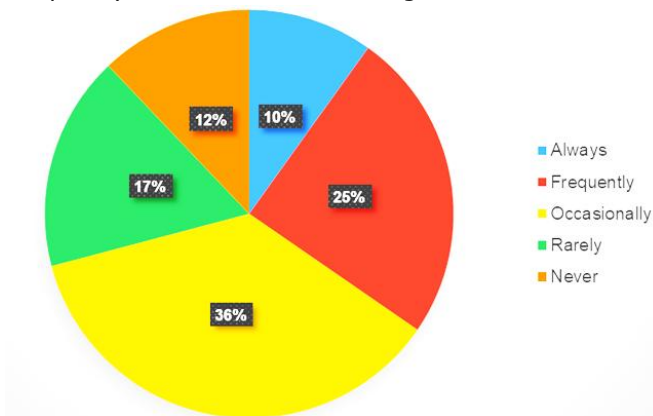
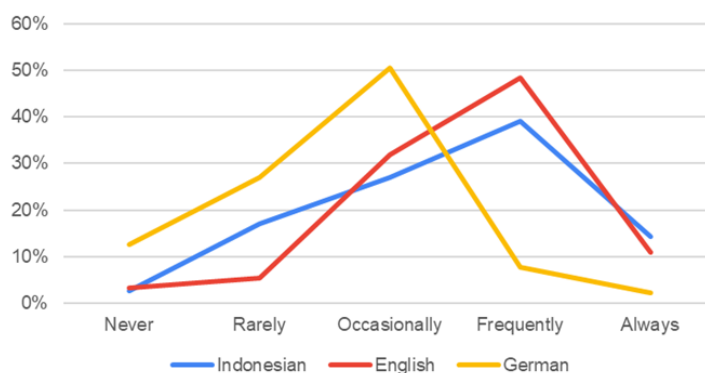


Figure 4

Frequency of Composing Social Media Captions in Multiple Languages



From a translanguaging perspective, which views multilingual speakers as fluid and strategic language users, the data demonstrate that learners use intentional and dynamic language to convey meaning in real-world contexts. Indonesian, the students' first language, is the most consistently used in captions, especially in the "Frequently" and "Always" categories, serving as a tool for authentic self-expression and connection with local audiences. English peaks in the "Frequently" category, reflecting its role as a global *lingua franca* and a medium for stylistic variation, academic alignment, or identity construction in cosmopolitan settings.

German, the target language, is most used at the "Occasionally" level. This suggests that students selectively deploy German to demonstrate progress, connect with specific audiences, or fulfil academic requirements. Such usage exemplifies translanguaging not as a fallback strategy but as a deliberate and agentic act of communication. Rather than switching languages out of necessity, students draw on their entire linguistic repertoire to construct and negotiate meaning. Social media, with its informal and interactive nature, thus serves as a fertile ground for translanguaging, enabling learners to experiment with language, perform identity, and respond to diverse audience expectations.

In addition to strategies, students reported diverse actions to support their language development through responses to open-ended questions. As described in Table 5, most seem to believe they can learn more through enjoyable activities like watching movies, listening to music, and playing games. Interestingly, in parallel with various activities that rely on independence, such as memorization, students also recognize the importance of cooperation in developing language comprehension, which is reflected in interactions with peers, native speakers, or even artificial intelligence (AI) agents.

Table 5
Students' Strategies in Learning German

Nr.	Learning strategies	Frequency	Example Responses
1	Audio-visual media	43	Watching movies or YouTube videos, listening to songs, podcasts, or dramas

Nr.	Learning strategies	Frequency	Example Responses
2	Memorizing	39	Memorizing vocabulary, rewriting, flashcards, sticky notes, and even sticking vocabulary words on the wall
3	Social interaction	25	Having conversations with peers, communicating with native speakers, finding study partners, or participating in group discussions
4	Formal instruction	10	Tutoring, private sessions
5	Metacognitive strategy	10	Reviewing material, evaluation, understanding context, using mind mapping, and self-reward
6	Games & creative Strategy	8	Games, quizzes, brainstorming, and writing German poems
7	Technology & applications	7	Using Duolingo or other interactive learning apps, conversing with AI

The qualitative analysis implies that the students use a number of strategies for learning the German language, which may be affected by their previous experience in language learning. Previous experience in this case is defined as the number of years of studying the foreign language before attending university classes, mostly within the framework of senior secondary school education. In order to find out whether there are any statistically significant differences in the usage of the previously learned strategies, the Kruskal-Wallis test was employed. According to the findings, there are no statistically significant differences in using the previously learned strategies for learning, $H(4) = 9.474$, $p = .050$. Nonetheless, the result is almost statistically significant. Descriptive statistics show that the highest mean ranks belong to students with more experience, whereas the lowest mean ranks belong to students with less experience.

Learning with Purpose: How Career Visions Triggers Engagement

Survey results indicate that fewer than half of the respondents (40.6%) selected the German language program as their first-choice major. In contrast, the remainder indicated it as a second or third preference. A Spearman rank-order correlation analysis was conducted to examine the impact of program

selection priority on students' career confidence. As shown in Table 6, the results reveal a statistically significant relationship between the motivation for the study program and students' perceptions of career prospects. The correlation coefficient (ρ) is 0.202, with a p -value of 0.0062 (< 0.05), indicating a weak but significant positive correlation. This suggests that students who chose the program based on interest, perceived career relevance, or long-term goals are more confident in securing employment after graduation.

Table 6

Spearman Correlation Between Study Program Motivation and Career-Related Perceptions

Variable	Spearman's ρ	p -value
Confidence in obtaining employment	0.202	0.0062*
Concern about an unrelated career	-0.176	0.0175*

Additionally, the analysis indicates a weak yet statistically significant negative correlation between study program motivation and concern about post-graduation employment mismatch ($\rho = -0.176$, $p = 0.0175$). This implies that the stronger the motivation behind choosing the major, the lower the level of anxiety regarding the possibility of working in a field unrelated to their academic background. Interestingly, among the 23 students who reported low or no awareness of career prospects for graduates (rating 1 or 2), 69.6% (16 students) expressed a high level of concern (rating 4 or 5) about being unable to pursue a career aligned with their academic training. These findings highlight the crucial role of career awareness in shaping students' confidence and reducing career-related anxiety.

Table 7

Spearman Correlation Analysis of Career Awareness and Learning Engagement

Variables on Learning Engagement				
Variables on Career Awareness	Study preparation	Germany-related information seeking	Additional learning resource search	Engagement with lecturer feedback
Career confidence	.128	.348**	.246**	.065

Variables on Learning Engagement				
Variables on Career Awareness	Study preparation	Germany-related information seeking	Additional learning resource search	Engagement with lecturer feedback
Career prospect awareness	.169*	.128	.167*	.390**

To understand how students engage in the learning process, this study analysed the relationships between career awareness and learning habits across three phases: before, during, and after class. The focus was on identifying how students exhibit autonomy and responsibility in learning management. Table 7 presents a Spearman correlation analysis examining two variables on career awareness, i.e. career confidence and awareness of career prospects, versus four dimensions of engagement: preparation before class, information seeking about Germany, searching for supplementary learning materials, and follow-up actions on instructors' feedback.

The analysis results show that career awareness positively affects student learning activity. Students who have a better understanding of graduate employment prospects (career prospect awareness) tend to be more exploratory in their learning, such as searching for information about Germany ($\rho = .348, p < .01$) and searching for additional materials ($\rho = .246, p < .01$). Meanwhile, confidence in obtaining employment (career confidence) is related to reflective engagement, especially in following up on lecturer feedback ($\rho = .390, p < .01$). Although not all aspects of learning activity show a strong relationship, this general pattern confirms that the higher students' career awareness and confidence, the greater their tendency to show initiative and independence in the learning process.

After conducting the above correlation analysis, the comparative analysis across semesters was carried out to determine if there was any variance in student engagement based on their academic years, hence uncovering the relational and developmental aspects. Results from the Kruskal Wallis analysis showed a statistically significant difference among semesters in student engagement with regard to information search about Germany ($H(2) = 9.491, p = 0.009$) and using learning materials ($H(2) = 7.548, p = 0.023$). In these areas, engagement levels were significantly high in higher-semester students compared to those in lower semesters. However, in

the areas of lesson preparation and lecturer's feedback reaction, there were no statistical differences ($H(2) = 0.853$, $p = 0.653$) and ($H(2) = 1.481$, $p = 0.477$). Thus, the findings suggest that although there is some stability regarding some forms of student engagement, other dimensions develop through time.

Discussion

The data indicate that daily use of multiple languages (Indonesian, Javanese, and English) did not directly predict stronger active skills in German. This contrasts with studies emphasizing a "multilingual advantage" promoted by many scholars, such as Herdina & Jessner (2002), Khan (2018), and Babušytė & Daunorienė (2022). Although Khan's findings indicate that multilingual students do not encounter structural barriers (Khan, 2018), the use of language modalities by students in Indonesia when learning German is still constrained by the compartmentalization of language use, whether in the home, the community, or at school. This suggests that multilingualism is not automatically beneficial; its effect depends on how learners can strategically activate and transfer their knowledge (Bredthauer, 2019; Carbonara, 2023).

At the same time, the significant correlation between digital multilingual practices and autonomous German learning highlights a new pathway: digital literacies as mediators of multilingual benefits. Students who used multiple languages on social media were more likely to self-direct their German learning, aligning with global findings on social media and other digital platforms such as video games, as an informal learning environment (Barrot, 2021; Ustaoğlu & Çelik, 2023; Ekayati et al., 2024). Thus, multilingualism matters not only in face-to-face communication but also in digital practices that support autonomy. Furthermore, this finding suggests that academic success is accessible to all students, as their existing linguistic repertoire does not act as a barrier or a determinant of their motivation to learn.

Findings also show that multilingual students rely on numerous learning strategies, in which audio-visual media and social interaction play a significant role. Activities such as watching movies, listening to music, and talking with

friends or native speakers not only help enrich linguistic input but also strengthen confidence in language use. Previous studies refer to these activities as manifestations of affective strategies (Oxford, 2001; Noprival et al., 2024). Identical to the result of Pawlak & Kiermasz's study (2018), these practices are remain primarily consumptive and are not entirely directed towards metacognitive reflection or cross-linguistic awareness. On the other hand, cognitive strategies such as note-taking, memorization, and repetition of material remain dominant, reflecting a learning orientation that focuses on mastery of formal structures rather than meaningful communication. To address this, educators must be equipped to transform passive media consumption into active, reflective learning encounters that align with the professional identities these students aspire to achieve.

Interestingly, some students demonstrated a more reflective approach through cross-language comparison, especially in grammar. This confirms the necessity of metalinguistic awareness as a bridge between the languages they master (Jessner, 2006; Chłopek, 2018; Převrátilová, 2023). However, although translanguaging is recognized as a powerful cognitive resource (García & Wei, 2014; Gantefort & Maahs, 2020), its application in academic contexts, such as note-taking or discussing in mixed languages, is still limited and more often appears in informal digital spaces, such as social media. In addition, some students have begun to utilize AI-based technology, such as conversational chatbots, to practice speaking independently. This practice marks the emergence of a new form of self-directed learning that combines autonomy, technology, and multilingual awareness (Li & Bonk, 2023; Dizon, 2024). Thus, this data highlights the need for pedagogy that supports conventional strategies and integrates translanguaging, interlingual comparison, and digital technology to sustainably develop metalinguistic awareness and learner autonomy, particularly for German instruction in Indonesia. That necessity becomes even more important given the observed trend that strategy use develops gradually and more intensively among learners with broader experience, although the differences were not statistically significant.

The results of this study indicate the dominance of career-oriented motivation among German language learners. Although less than half of

the students chose the German language program as their first choice, those who did so had higher career confidence and lower anxiety levels. This indicates that perceiving German as a professional asset fosters a strong linguistic identity. These findings challenge traditional second language motivation models, which focus on integrative motives (Riemer, 2016; Hong & Ganapathy, 2017; Suliman et al., 2024). In Indonesia, where German is not widely spoken, instrumental motivation, such as job opportunities and career identity, is more prominent. This suggests that motivation theory should adapt to local contexts, as outlined by Hong & Ganapathy (2017) and Sadik (2025). Consequently, educational practices should shift from traditional integrative goals to a sustainable plurilingual approach that strategically positions German language proficiency as a dynamic asset for navigating global employment opportunities.

In addition, analysis of engagement with learning through semesters indicates a trend of increasing interest in and engagement with self-directed exploratory learning. This is due to both increasing academic experience on one hand and motivational factors related to students' future orientation on the other hand. In accordance with Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent & Brown, 2019), students who have higher career awareness will be more motivated to explore learning materials and will react positively to feedback. Nonetheless, having career awareness does not mean that such students will automatically continue to learn. Mediating factors such as intrinsic motivation and career self-efficacy are needed to internalise career awareness into continuous learning actions (Busse & Williams, 2010; Sadik, 2025). Hence, German language learning in this context needs to be directed not only at providing career information, but also at strengthening students' self-confidence and personal values regarding the relevance of language for their professional future.

Research Limitations

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. Firstly, the sample size used is relatively small due to convenience, and data were collected at one university in Indonesia. Hence, the generalizability of the findings

obtained cannot be extended to all German language learners in Indonesia. Secondly, the methodology involves the use of self-report questionnaires as a method of collecting data. Thus, the conclusions made cannot objectively represent what happens because students' perceptions may influence their answers. Thirdly, while the topic focuses on digital learning, the measure of digital literacy used in the methodology was not measured, but was indirectly captured from the learning processes. Fourthly, in terms of data quality, the depth of qualitative data received from the open-ended questions cannot provide rich data that is associated with the digital learning process.

All in all, there are several recommendations that can be made for further studies that focus on the same topic. For example, conducting studies using different sampling techniques, including objective measurements and qualitative methods such as interviews, will be beneficial. Additionally, studying the effects of German language learning for an extended period will provide relevant information, especially with respect to language strategies used by bilinguals and monolinguals for career advancement purposes.

Conclusion

To conclude, the study's findings show that a multilingual background does not directly improve German language skills, but it is linked to autonomous learning practices through the use of digital platforms. The diverse experiences of language use and learning multiple languages that students possess give rise to flexible learning strategies, such as combining audio-visual media, social interaction, and interlingual reflection, as well as beginning to utilise technologies such as AI chatbots for independent practice. Furthermore, career awareness has been a key driver of learning engagement. This suggests that career orientation motivates students to continue developing their German language skills.

From the results obtained during this investigation, it becomes evident that students' multilingual repertoires are typically disjointed since these repertoires operate in different contexts, such as at home, school, or while communicating with peers. It constitutes another barrier in terms of employing multilingual repertoires as a pedagogical resource. Thus, teaching German

should take into account how to engage students' skills and promote digitally mediated communication to stimulate autonomous learning.

Meanwhile, the high frequency of career-related motivation suggests that the learning context may play an important role in enhancing language education. Consequently, using innovative approaches should be accompanied by relevant conditions. For instance, there is an urgent need to create training programs for educators and future teachers to help them develop skills to integrate cross-cultural reflection, employ students' multilingual repertoires using translanguaging, and design digital ecosystems for professional practice. Engaging in professional development also helps to facilitate reflection and inquiry and stimulates teachers to draw on their multilingual experience. In sum, these actions allow not only increasing engagement and fostering autonomy but also ensuring more integrated language use. They also contribute to the development of multilingual competence as they enable its meaningful and sustainable use.

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STRATEGINIS DAUGIAKALBIS MĄSTYMAS: VOKIEČIŲ KALBOS MOKYMO PATIRTIS APIE METALINGVISTINĮ SĄMONINGUMĄ IR KARJEROS MOTYVACIJĄ UŽSIENIO KALBŲ MOKYMO SRITYJE

Anotacija. Ankstesniuose tyrimuose buvo nagrinėjamos motyvacija ir mokymosi strategijos įsisavinant antrąją kalbą, tačiau tik nedaugelis tyrimų konkrečiai analizavo, kaip daugiakalbė, o ne vien tik dvikalbė, aplinka veikia vokiečių kaip papildomos kalbos mokymosi procesą. Be to, į karjerą orientuotos motyvacijos vaidmuo palaikant studentų įsitraukimą dar menkai ištirtas, ypač kai vokiečių kalbos mokomasi profesinio tobulėjimo, o ne migracijos ar akademinio mobilumo tikslais. Siekiant užpildyti šias spragas, tyrime nagrinėjama dinamiška daugiakalbystės, motyvacijos ir mokymosi strategijų sąveika, pasitelkus vokiečių kalbos programoje besimokančius Indonezijos universiteto studentus. Taikant konvergencinį mišrių metodų modelį, iš 182 respondentų surinkti kiekybiniai ir kokybiniai duomenys per internetinę anketą, kurioje buvo derinami Likerto skalės klausimai ir atviri atsakymai iš trijų semestrų kohortų. Kiekybinė analizė, atlikta naudojant Kruskalio–Walliso, Spearmano ir Pearsono testus, parodė, kad daugiakalbė aplinka tiesiogiai nepadidino vokiečių kalbos mokėjimo lygio; tačiau skaitmeninės daugiakalbės praktikos buvo reikšmingai susijusios su didesniu savarankišku įsitraukimu į vokiečių kalbos mokymąsi. Atlikus kokybinių duomenų teminę analizę, buvo nustatytos lanksčios mokymosi strategijos, apimančios audiovizualines priemones, socialinę sąveiką, tarpkalbinę refleksiją ir vis dažniau naudojamas dirbtinio intelekto priemones, pavyzdžiui, pokalbių robotus, skirtus kalbėjimo gebėjimams savarankiškai lavinti. Karjeros sąmoningumas pasirodė esąs svarbus motyvacinis veiksnys, formuojantis studentų įsitraukimą į kalbos mokymąsi, o tai rodo, kad karjeros tikslai yra esminiai siekiant išlaikyti pasiryžimą tobulinti vokiečių kalbos kompetenciją. Tyrimo rezultatai pabrėžia daugiakalbystės ir skaitmeninio raštingumo svarbą kuriant tikslingesnius, su karjera susijusius vokiečių kaip užsienio kalbos mokymosi metodus.

Pagrindinės sąvokos: daugiakalbystė; karjeros sąmoningumas; metalingvistinis sąmoningumas; mokymosi strategija; motyvacija.

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GAGASAN STRATEGIS MULTIBAHASA: PERSPEKTIF DARI PEMBELAJARAN BAHASA JERMAN TERHADAP KESADARAN METALINGUISTIK DAN MOTIVASI KARIER DALAM PENDIDIKAN BAHASA ASING

Abstrak: Kendati penelitian terdahulu telah mengeksplorasi pembahasan tentang motivasi dan strategi belajar dalam pemerolehan bahasa kedua, masih sedikit studi yang meneliti bagaimana latar belakang multibahasa, bukan sekadar bilingual, berpengaruh terhadap proses pembelajaran bahasa Jerman sebagai bahasa asing. Lebih dari itu, peran motivasi yang berorientasi pada karier terhadap upaya mempertahankan keaktifan pembelajar juga belum banyak digali, terutama dalam konteks bahasa Jerman yang dipelajari lebih untuk tujuan pengembangan profesi daripada tujuan migrasi atau mobilitas akademik. Untuk mengatasi kesenjangan ini, penelitian ini menyelidiki interaksi dinamis antara multibahasa, motivasi, dan strategi belajar para mahasiswa dari satu program studi Pendidikan Bahasa Jerman di Indonesia. Dengan menerapkan metode campuran konvergen, penelitian ini mengumpulkan data kuantitatif dan kualitatif yang diperoleh melalui kuesioner daring yang diisi oleh 182 responden dari tiga tingkatan semester yang berbeda. Kuesioner tersebut tidak hanya memuat jawaban dalam bentuk skala Likert, tetapi juga respons terbuka. Selanjutnya, hasil analisis kuantitatif dari uji Kruskal-Wallis, uji Spearman, dan uji Pearson menunjukkan bahwa latar belakang multibahasa tidak secara langsung berpengaruh terhadap peningkatan kemampuan berbahasa Jerman, sedangkan praktik-praktik multibahasa dalam ranah digital mengungkapkan adanya hubungan yang signifikan dengan keaktifan belajar bahasa Jerman secara otonom. Di sisi lain, analisis tematik terhadap data kualitatif berhasil mengidentifikasi adanya penggunaan strategi belajar yang mengintegrasikan media audiovisual, interaksi sosial, refleksi antarbahasa, dan penggunaan aplikasi berbasis AI dalam latihan berbicara secara mandiri. Kesadaran karier terlihat sebagai faktor motivasi yang berpengaruh signifikan terhadap pembentukan keaktifan mahasiswa. Hal ini mengindikasikan bahwa tujuan belajar yang berorientasi pada karier berperan penting dalam pemertahanan komitmen mahasiswa untuk mengembangkan kompetensi bahasa Jerman. Temuan ini menyoroti pentingnya pemanfaatan literasi multibahasa dan literasi digital untuk merancang pendekatan pembelajaran bahasa Jerman sebagai bahasa asing yang lebih terarah dan relevan dengan dunia kerja.

Kata kunci: multibahasa; motivasi; kesadaran metalinguistik; strategi belajar; kesadaran karier