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This thesis was submitted by its author to the School of English and American Studies, Eötvös Loránd University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts. It was found to be among the best theses submitted in 2021, therefore it was decorated with the School's Outstanding Thesis Award. As such it is published in the form it was submitted in **overSEAS 2021** (<http://seas3.elte.hu/overseas/2021.html>)

EÖTVÖS LORÁND TUDOMÁNYEGYETEM

Bölcsész tudományi Kar

DIPLOMA MUNKA

MA THESIS

*Angol és egyéb idegen nyelvek tanulmánya: egy motivációs
interjú kutatás eredményei*

*An interview study on language learning motivation: The case
of English and other languages*

Témavezető:

Dr Csizér Katalin

Habilitált egyetemi docens

Készítette:

Woynárovich Kata

Anglisztika MA

Alkalmazott nyelvészet

2021

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Abstract

Motivation, self-determination, and attribution theory in the area of language learning have been widely researched fields (Gan et al.,2004; Gerami & Baighlou, 2011; Gregersen et al., 2001; Griffiths, 2013; Xiao, 2012; Zhang, 2020). However, most of these studies focus on successful English learners, as well as young adults. Therefore, the aim of this thesis was to explore why while some learners failed to master English, succeeded in mastering a foreign language other than English. In addition, it also sought to find out to what these learners attribute their failures and successes. The participants were nine Hungarian adults between the ages of 23 and 69. In order to answer the research questions the study took a qualitative and longitudinal retrospective approach; and accordingly, a semi-structured interview guide was developed. The findings indicate that learners who were not only intrinsically motivated, but also had long turn instrumental goals were more successful at mastering a foreign language. In addition, the study also found that regardless of age, teachers and the lessons also have a prominent role in the language learning processes.

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1. Introduction

Scholars have been researching the motivational orientations behind second and foreign language learning for decades now, (e.g., Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Dörnyei, 1994; Noels, 2001; or Csizér, 2019). In addition, even though knowing any foreign language is an essential skill, English is often the preferred choice of research (Duff, 2017); this is especially true now, in the 21st century. However, while there seem to be learners who fail to achieve a desired level of English, in some cases these same people had not only chosen, but also managed to acquire languages other than English (LOTE). Therefore, the aim of this interview study is to find out what motivated some adults to acquire a LOTE, and what motivation they lacked to learn English. In addition, my thesis also aims to find out with what the interview participants explain their successes and/or failures in learning English and/or a LOTE. This aim was set because information on successes and failures in learning foreign languages can help teachers and curriculum writers develop courses that facilitate adult language learners. In addition, the research rationale is that most foreign language motivational theories focus on English, hence there is less information on languages other than English.

The majority of the literature in the area of language learning motivation mostly focuses on the following three topics: successful learners, such as Rubin and Thompson (1982), Rubin (2005), Griffiths (2013), Zhang (2020), as well as Salam and Arifin (2020); young adults, like Gregersen et al. (2001), Gan et al. (2004), Qingquan et al. (2008), Gerami and Baighlou (2011), as well as Xiao (2012); or strategies rather than motivation, for example, Reiss (1981), Vann and Abraham (1990), Rees-Miller (1993), and Gregersen et al. (2001). Therefore, there seems to be a gap in research related to the motivational orientations and attributional dimensions of adult language learners who feel that while they were unsuccessful in mastering English, they managed to learn another foreign language.

As there are not only children and young adult, but adult language learners as well, it is important to find out what motivational, and other factors could contribute to their successes, as well as hinder their development. Accordingly, this study seeks answer to the following research questions:

1. What were participants' views about their motivation to master a foreign language other than English?
2. In their views, what motivation did the participant lack that led to them not being able to master English at a level they would have desired to do so?
3. What views do participants express when explaining their perceived insufficient levels of English?
4. What explanations do participants give to the differences in their levels of English and another language?

In order to answer these research questions, the study presented here has five main parts. After a brief introduction, in order to answer the research questions, it reviews the relevant literature that discusses motivational constructs, self/determination, and attributional theory. Then, in the methods section six areas will be discussed. Firstly, the context of the study, which is Hungary. Secondly, the design: qualitative and longitudinal retrospective approach. Thirdly, the participants who were all Hungarian working or retired adults. Then it will describe the instrument and data collection: semi-structured interviews carried out in Hungarian. Finally, it will talk about the analysis process, in other words the coding and categorisation of the gathered data. In the fourth chapter it discusses the emerging themes – for example parents, teachers, or classroom tasks and topics –, and relates them to the discussed literature. Finally, in the conclusion, it discusses the implications of the results, as well as the limitations and possible future research.

2. Literature review

Although there are many theories and definitions of motivation, Woolfolk (2016) distinguishes five main approaches: behavioural, humanistic, cognitive, social cognitive, and sociocultural. According to the behavioural view student motivation is based on external rewards (e.g., good grades) and incentives (e.g., the prospect of getting a good grade). Therefore, motivation in this sense is extrinsic. The humanistic approaches emphasise the importance of intrinsic motivational sources. These sources can be self-actualization (Maslow, 1968) or self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Cognitive theories, on the other hand, believe that “behavior is determined by our thinking, not simply by whether we have been rewarded or punished for the behavior in the past” (Woolfolk, 2016, p 473). Hence, motivation is based on and controlled by plans (Miller et al., 1960), goals (Locke & Latham, 2002), and attributions (Weiner, 2010). In this case, motivation has an intrinsic source. In the social cognitive approaches, motivation is defined based on two perspectives of one’s goal: the value and the likelihood of reaching said goal. These two complement each other, and if either of them is low, over even zero, then the motivation will also be either low, or zero (Woolfolk, 2016). In this theory cost – the amount of energy needed to achieve the goal – can also play an important role (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). If the cost is too high, motivation can be lost. Consequently, social cognitive theories look at both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. And finally, sociocultural conceptions of motivation state that on the one hand, “people engage in activities to maintain their identities and their interpersonal relations within the community” (Woolfolk, 2016, p. 473); and on the other hand, they also learn by simply being with and watching members of a community (Woolfolk, 2016). In other words, the motivation to learn is both intrinsic and integrative.

Due to this study’s field of enquiry, the literature review is going to discuss all of the above-mentioned approaches in the following structure. First, motivation in the general area

of education and language learning will be examined. Then, due to its specialised nature and the fact that English seems to be one of the most dominant languages of the world, motivation in learning languages other than English will be reviewed. The third main section of the literature review is going to examine self-determination, as this theory discusses to what extent people freely chose to do an action (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which factor can strongly affect motivation. The final section of this chapter is going to discuss attribution theory as it examines with what people explain the outcomes of their actions; more specifically, their successes and failures (Weiner, 2010).

2.1. Motivation in education and foreign language learning

In order to answer research questions one and two – *What were participants' views about their motivation to master a foreign language other than English?* and *In their view, what motivation did the participants lack that led to them not being able to master English at a level they would have desired to do so?* – this section is going to examine the characteristics of motivation in the context of education and language learning. To do so, it will first look at general definitions of motivation in the said context. Then it will investigate the differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. And finally, this section is going to review the types of instrumental motivational domains, as well as integrative motivation.

Motivation has several definitions and descriptions. Gardner (1985) says that in the context of language learning motivation is the mixture of wanting to achieve a goal and the effort made to do so, as well as positive attitudes. Dörnyei (2001) states that motivation is an extremely complex field of study; however, in simple terms it can be defined as the root of any action. Furthermore, he also says that “human behaviour has two main dimensions – *direction* and *magnitude* (intensity)” (p. 7). Accordingly, motivation seeks to explain why an action is done, with what intensity it is done, as well as the duration of the activity. Ellis

(2004), however, distinguishes between orientation and motivation. While the former “refers to the long-range goals that learners have for learning a language” (Ellis, 2004, p. 536); the latter – is in line with Dörnyei’s (2001) definition – is “the effort learners were prepared to make to learn a language and their persistence in learning” (Ellis, 2004, p. 537).

2.1.1. The intrinsic and extrinsic continuum

Motivation can be regarded in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic continuum (Noels, 2001). The former refers to an “inherent pleasure and interest in the activity” (Noels, 2001, p. 45), and the latter points to “reasons that are instrumental to some consequences apart from inherent interest in the activity” (Noels, 2001, p. 46). In other words, if the motivation is extrinsic, the reason why someone is doing an activity can be found outside the activity itself (Noels et al., 2019). Lamb’s (2019) examples of extrinsic motivational factors are the following: high exam grades, rewards, praise, and entertaining activities. In his classical framework, Dörnyei (1994) calls this the Learning Situation which involves motives specific to the classroom setting. These include interest in learning materials, teacher, or reward systems. Noels (2001) also points out the importance of external regulation, a sub-category of external motivation. In this case, the learner is studying the foreign language because of a specific environmental reason (e.g., it is a compulsory subject at school, or the parents insist on taking the class).

In order to maintain motivation, the support of the learner’s environment is of essence; more specifically, if circumstances are not supportive, people can lose motivation (Noels, 2001). Csizér (2019) says that teachers and parents have a similar influence on language learning experiences. This means that extrinsic motivation to learn languages does not originate from the immediate classroom environment, but also from the parents. In addition, Noels (2001) maintains that parental support and encouragement at an early age plays a vital

role in developing motivation, which in turn will have an effect on adult motivation.

However, she also says that “the use of threats, deadlines, directives, imposed goals, or even imposed rewards, is likely to lower motivation” (Noels, 2001, p. 55). As well as this, teachers who give positive feedback in language development contribute to the development of intrinsic motivation (Noels, 2001). And finally, Noels (2001) also states that quality and frequent interaction with members of the second language (L2) community can positively influence not only motivation and self-confidence, but language proficiency as well (Noels, 2001). Dörnyei et al. (2006) extend this to milieu which is the learning environment; for example, the classroom, family, the teacher, etc.

Within extrinsic motivation, tasks can play an extremely important role (Kormos & Wilby, 2019). Learners evaluate tasks based on three dimensions: their own ability to do them, the enjoyability of the task, as well as its perceived usefulness, i.e. its value (Boekaerts, 2002). Kormos and Wilby (2019) maintain that students are more likely to engage in tasks if that they feel are in line with their own values and goals. This is, as Eccles (2005) puts it, the utility value of tasks. Hidi et al. (1992) differentiate between state and situation specific interest. While the former is a general personal interest, the latter stems from the immediate learning environment, for example the content or novelty. In their study, Hidi and Renninger (2006) found that when both state and situation-specific interest are present, the level of learner motivation increases. In other words, if a task is personally relevant as well as novel learners will be more motivated and they will put in more effort, which will lead to more learning (Kormos & Wilby, 2019).

However, generally speaking, neither external, nor internal pressure can “reliably predict effort, persistence and attitude” (Noels, 2001, p. 50); therefore, having any kind of reason to learn a language can be motivating. Having said that, Lamb (Lamb, 2019) maintains that developing short-term extrinsic motivation (e.g., the prospect of rewards) will not “foster

the kind of intrinsic motives and internalized goals which are surely necessary to sustain motivation for long enough to achieve proficiency in a foreign language” (Lamb, 2019, pp. 297).

The above discussed motivational dimensions and orientations are also highlighted in two additional studies: Nikolov (2001), as well as Kálmán and Gutierrez Eugenio (2015). In her study, Nikolov (2001) concluded that the majority of learners believe that the key to successful language learning is perseverance, will, enthusiasm, ability, and a good memory. In addition, she also emphasises the importance of teachers: a teacher perceived to be bad by the learners can contribute to the failure of learning a language. Kálmán and Gutierrez Eugenio’s (2015) found that interest, effort, task and teacher are causes that their participants directly related to their success in learning English. As well as this, they determined the “ability is an important contributor to intrinsic motivation” (Kálmán & Gutierrez Eugenio 2015, p. 603).

2.1.2. Instrumental and integrative motivation

Noels (2001) points out that the two areas that received the most attention in research are integrative – the desire to interact with, or to integrate into the community of speakers of the target language – and instrumental – the desire to learn the target language in order to achieve practical goals, such as receiving a higher salary – motivation. Dörnyei’s (1994) framework labels this as the Language Level and says that “these general motives determine basic learning goals and explain language choice” (p. 279). Dörnyei et al. (2006) separate two sub- dimensions of integrative motivation: attitudes towards the L2 speakers/community and cultural interest. The former encompasses positive and/or negative emotions when meeting L2 speakers or visiting their country; and the latter covers any indirect contact with the culture of the target language, such as music, films, books, etc. Although there has been debate over which one is more prominent in upholding effort, she suggests that both are equally

important. However, although there are a number of studies concluding that cultural interest can facilitate motivation (Thompson, 2019), Noels (2001) also notes that “integrative motivation might not be relevant to many learners” (p. 44).

On the other hand, instrumental motivation involves, often internalised, extrinsic motives focused on career development (Dörnyei, 1994). Dörnyei and Usioda (2011) divides instrumental motivation into two subcategories: instrumentality-promotion and instrumentality-prevention. The former refers to motivation goals in order to achieve success, for example getting a better job or salary; and the latter focuses on avoiding negative experiences, like failing an exam or disappointing significant others. Dörnyei (2001) lists several values linked to instrumental motivation: “earning extra money, getting a promotion; pursuing further studies where the L2 is a requirement, improving one's social position; pursuing hobbies and other leisure activities which require the language (e.g., computing), etc” (p. 56). In terms of instrumental motivation Noels (2001) lists several orientations, such as travel, friendship, or media usage.

2.1.3. Demotivation

In order to answer the four previously posed research questions, it is important to look at demotivation as well. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) describe demotivation as “various negative influences that cancel out existing motivation” (p. 138). Thorner and Kikuchi (2019) emphasise that these influences are external. Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) in their study listed six demotivating influences in the context of English as a foreign language: (1) teachers who are perceived to lack sufficient language knowledge or teaching competence, whose personality is off putting; (2) negative characteristics of classes, such as course content or pace, boring lessons, too difficult target language or vocabulary; (3) failure to pass tests or remember vocabulary; (4) class environment, for example attitudes of peers and friends, inappropriate

difficulty level, obligatory nature of English; (5) unsuitable or boring class materials; (6) general lack of interest in the language, subject, or language community. This is supported by what Ryan (2019) says: people tend to “move towards positive stimuli” and “move away from negative stimuli” (p. 167).

2.2. Motivation in learning languages other than English

As the result of English as widespread as it is, the majority of people choose to study English as a foreign language. However, there are still some who decide to learn, or focus on, foreign languages other than English. Accordingly, the first and fourth research questions focus on this area: *What were participants' views about their motivation to master a foreign language other than English?* and *What explanations do participants give to the differences in their levels of English and another language?*, respectively. In order to answer this question, the literature review looked at Cook's (1995) multi-competence theory, Duff's (2017) reasons as to why people chose English over other languages, and finally the motivational characteristics of learning a language other than English as defined by Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie (2017).

It was Cook (1995) who first coined the term ‘multi-competence’, which treats L1 and L2, as well as potentially other language competences, as a single system. Duff (2017) supports this by stating that “identities need to be viewed [...] across multiple languages, not as separate systems” (p. 599). Cook (1995) also emphasises that “the knowledge of the second language is not an imitation knowledge of a first language; it's something that has to be treated on its own terms, alongside the knowledge of a first language” (p. 94). In addition, Henry (2017) proposes that the various languages a learner speaks need to be viewed as one interconnected system. He also states that “focus needs to be directed to the dynamic

interactions of the Lx and Ly motivational systems and the emergent motivational properties arising therefrom (Henry, 2017, p. 549).

Duff (2017) asserts that “for speakers from non-Anglophone language backgrounds, English is often positioned as a preferred, indeed obligatory, additional language” (p. 598), whereas other languages are usually linked to more symbolic values, such as faith, heritage, or exoticness. In addition, to learn these languages are frequently less motivating, as stakes and rewards are often less important than those of English (Duff, 2017). She also states that quite often learners chose a language other than English because it is ‘marked’; for example, it is said to be extremely difficult, rare, or of no practical value.

Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie (2017) list several characteristics of learning a language other than English. Firstly, most often it happens simultaneously with English, which means that it can be overshadowed by it. Secondly, it is most frequently associated with a specific community; and the members of such communities, more often than not, have positive attitudes towards the learners. And finally, the motivation to learn is frequently extremely specific and personal.

Therefore, it can be seen that although the general motivational patterns and orientations are also present when learning a language other than English, there can also be very specific and personal reasons behind it. These reasons can originate from the language itself (e.g. markedness) or stem from personal motives (e.g. family heritage).

2.3. Self-determination

Deci and Ryan (1985) define self-determination as “the capacity to choose and to have those choices be the determinants of one’s actions” (p. 38). The characteristics of self-determination is the ability to flexibly control the interplay between ourselves and our environment (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Deci and Ryan (1985) also say that although it implies

control of actions, outcomes, and the environment; the choice could be made to give up this control. They add that “self-determination is an essential part of intrinsically motivated behaviour” (p. 38). Therefore, a self-determined person will act because they choose to do so, not because they have to (Deci & Ryan, 1985). In other words, the learner takes on the activity “with a full sense of wanting, choosing, and personal endorsement” (Deci, 1992, p. 44). Noels (2001) proposes that people who are self-determined and have intrinsic motivation will continue to do an activity for a longer period of time, and will do it with greater effort.

As seen in the previous section, motivation can have two types, intrinsic and extrinsic; which is of importance in self-determination theory as well (Noels et al., 2000). The former covers any type of personal interest or pleasure in a given activity. Hence, if a person believes that the source of their action comes from within – an internal perceived locus –, their self-determination will be high. (Reeve, 2002). In addition, this intrinsic motivation can be supported by one’s freedom to make the choice to engage in an activity (Patall, 2012). The latter, external motivation, can be divided into three further sub-categories: external regulation, introjected regulation, and identified regulation (Noels et al., 2000). Externally regulated activities are those that purely stem from an outside source, such as costs or benefits; and if this reason ceases to exist, the activity will most likely be stopped (Noels et al., 2000). In a way, the opposite of this is introjected regulation. In this case a person takes up an activity because they have a personal reason to do so; in other words, the given activity is of essence in achieving an important goal (Noels et al., 2000). And finally, on the scale between the previous two is introjected regulations. In a sense this is more internal compared to external regulation because the activity is performed “due to some type of pressure that individuals have incorporated into the self” (Noels et al., 2000. p. 62). Therefore, learning will only happen as long as this pressure exists. From these three factors it can be seen that self-determination can be both facilitated and inhibited by external factors (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Reeve (2002) maintains that both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation are of equal importance in self-determination.

It is important to note that apart from intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, self-determination theory also incorporates amotivation. Amotivation can be summed up as the lack of value and/or perceived competence (Noels et al, 2019). Deci and Ryan (1985) state that amotivated behaviour originates neither extrinsically nor intrinsically; but rather, can be described as a state that is beyond one's control. This means that "people have no sense of intentionality, so goals are not even set let alone carried out" (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 241). Amotivation can be the result of continuous and detrimental negative feedback (Deci & Ryan, 2012), persistent rejection of freedom (Deci & Ryan 1985), lack of desired outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2007), as well as a permanent competitive situation where some learners never manage to win (Deci & Ryan 1985).

Teachers can play an important role in self-determination. As Reeve (2002) puts it, "students achieve highly [...] in part because their teachers support their autonomy rather than control their behaviour" (p. 183) because this supports intrinsic motivation. Example of such behaviour are praising, listening more, and responding to the students' questions (Reeve, 2002). This is the result of two qualities: volition, which is a desire to take up an activity without external pressure; and a perceived choice, the feeling of control over one's choices. In this sense, the way a teacher teaches has a direct impact on how self-determined a student will be (Reeve, 2002).

However, apart from teachers, parents also play a significant role in how self-determined learners are (Pomerantz et al., 2009). Studies have shown (Pomerantz et al., 2009) that parental involvement in a child's learning can significantly boost a child's level of self-determination and self-worth, as well as their investment in studying. In addition, just like in the case of teachers, it is important for parents to promote and facilitate autonomy (Pomerantz

et al., 2009). In other words, the more parents support autonomy, the more intrinsically motivated children will be.

Consequently, in order to answer this study's research questions it is important to find out how self-determined the participants were, or still are. This is because both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation are heavily dependent of self-determination: if a learner freely chooses to learn a language – either because they like the language itself or they feel knowing it will aid them in achieving a goal –, they will be more likely to achieve success. In addition, both their significant others (e.g., parents) and teachers play a vital part in how self-determined language learners are.

2.4. Attribution theory

One of the most prominent sources of L2 motivation can be found in past learning and language related experiences (Csizér, 2019). Accordingly, in order to answer research questions three and four – *What views do participants express when explaining their perceived insufficient levels of English?* and *What explanations do participants give to the differences in their levels of English and another language?* – attribution theory will be examined as the main aim of this theory is to find out with what people explain the outcomes of their actions, or rather their successes and failures (Weiner, 2010). As per Heider (1985), for these people either give internal or external reasons. These two categories can be further classified according to three dimensions: intrinsic – extrinsic, stable – unstable, and controllable – uncontrollable (Weiner, 2010).

It was Fritz Heider in the 1940s and 1950s who first started focusing on how the perception of events, rather than the events themselves influence behaviour (Williams & Burden, 1997). Heider (1985) said that in common sense-psychology people generally talk about two types of conditions when explaining outcomes of actions: “factors within the actor

or factors within the environment” (p. 82). This idea was taken up by Bernard Weiner in the late 1970s (Williams & Burden, 1997). Weiner (2010) defines attribution theory as a “field of enquiry rather than a specific scientific conception” (p. 558) as it studies beliefs, assumptions, as well as causes explaining outcomes related to success and failure. Weiner (2010) also points out that attribution theory is not necessarily interested in the facts, but rather what people believe the causes and reasons are behind their successes and failures.

In the context of education, Weiner (2010) distinguishes six main attributional categories: ability, effort, tasks, teacher, mood, and luck. In his study Peacock (2010) found that teachers and language learners attribute success to different reasons. The latter maintained that their success was mainly due to their teacher and luck, and not effort. The former reported that learners were successful because of their interest in and love of English as well as their effort. Weiner’s (2010) attributional categories can be placed into three dimensions: intrinsic – extrinsic, stable – unstable, controllable – uncontrollable. Lou and Noels (2019) point out the importance of the controllable – uncontrollable dichotomy. They say that while uncontrollable attribution weakens learners’ intrinsic motivation, controllable attribution facilitates it. For example, although perspectives could differ, ability is often viewed as an intrinsic, stable, and uncontrollable trait. Williams and Burden (1997) point out that the way people view these dimensions can be highly personal. For instance, while one learner can view luck as something they were born with (stable), other learners can see it as something that changes on daily bases (unstable). Williams and Burden (1997) also call attention to the fact that different combinations will result in different outcomes. For example, if two learners believe that they lack the ability to learn languages quickly, a difficult task can result in different levels of effort if one of them think that this ability can be improved (unstable) and the other thinks it is something one is born with (stable).

Williams and Burden (1997) assert that attributions in connection with success and failure are not so much global, as situation specific. Research seems to support that people tend to externalise the reasons of failure, while they internalise the causes of success (Williams & Burden, 1997). Consequently, “success and failure are not absolutes but relative, defined in different ways by different cultures, groups and individuals (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 106). Mori et al. (2011) found that high proficiency students tend to attribute their successes to internal, controllable and stable factors more than lower-level learners. In addition, while the former explain their failures with external, uncontrollable, and unstable reasons; the latter do the opposite.

However, people can often make mistakes when attributing causes to outcomes. More specifically, while processing events and outcomes people tend to make errors, or biased judgements. Bordens and Horowitz (2008) assert that one of the most common type of such mistake is the fundamental attribution error. This means that people have the tendency to attribute causes to people rather than situations. Hegtvedt and Johnson (2017) explain fundamental attribution errors as the combination of overestimating dispositional factors and underestimating external ones. In terms of language learning, an example of this could be when a teacher states the student is lazy, whereas the only reason they did not do their homework was because they had an important match the previous day. In addition, people often tend to attribute outcomes in a way that makes them appear in better light, hence protecting their self-esteem (Hegtvedt & Johnson, 2017). Consequently, “perceivers are likely to make internal attributions for positive outcomes and external attributions for negative ones” (Hegtvedt & Johnson, 2017, p. 169). This is the self-serving bias which allows individuals to attribute success to themselves and put the blame on others for failures. However, Bordens and Horowitz (2008) call this the actor-observer bias and maintain – just as Hegtvedt and

Johnson (2017) – that this is particularly dominant when people try to explain negative outcomes.

In conclusion, in order to fully understand the views and explanations of participants as to why they feel they have failed or successes in learning a foreign language it is important to analyse their answers with attribution theory in mind. As it can be seen, although learners can misjudge the reasons behind the outcome of their actions, these judgements can, and will, have an effect on their future learning processes. Hence, in order to help their future language studies, it is necessary to understand their attributions.

3. Methods

3.1. Context of the study

The research was conducted in Hungary, a Central European country, with Hungarian adult participants. Hungary's population is just under 10 million. The official language of Hungary is Hungarian, with 99% of the population claiming it to be their first language (Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 2011). Based on a 2016 survey conducted by the European Union (Eurostat: Statistics Explained, 2019), among the adult population (ages 25-65) 57.6% percent claimed they spoke no foreign languages, 28.6% said they spoke one, and only 13.8% stated they spoke two or more foreign languages. However, according to Beadle et. al's (2015) study in Europe "90% of businesses say that knowledge of foreign languages matters for operational reasons or for competing in the market" (p. 12) In terms of Hungary, 73% of businesses said that knowing foreign languages is either very important or rather important (42% and 31%, respectively). In addition, students can only get university degrees if they

have minimum one language certificate. Hence, in Hungary knowing minimum one foreign language is extremely important.

In terms of its language, Hungary is in a unique position. Firstly, it belongs to the Finno-Ugric language family; hence, Hungarian speakers cannot communicate in their L1 with not only any of their neighbours, but also with any other nationals. Accordingly, if Hungarians wish to communicate with foreign nationals, they have to do it in a language other than Hungarian. This fact is of importance regarding this study because seven of the nine participants stated that regularly need to communicate with foreigners. Secondly, during the four decades of communism (between 1949 and 1989) Russian was an obligatory foreign language in all state schools (both elementary and secondary schools), yet according to the 1990 National Census (Statistical Yearbook of Hungary 1994, 1995) only 1.5% of the people stated they spoke it. In addition, during these four decades people had little opportunities – apart from the Eastern Bloc – to travel abroad, and equally few foreigners were permitted to enter the country. However, after 1989, when the country transitioned to liberal democracy, the borders opened up and the importance of knowing foreign languages quickly increased. In terms of the participants of the present thesis, five out of the eight were affected by this, as they grew up in the communist era.

3.2. Design of the study

In order to fully explore the research questions this study takes a qualitative – in the form of semi-structured interviews – and a longitudinal retrospective approach. The former because interviews provide rich descriptions and allow participants to fully explore and recount their personal experiences, emotions, encounters, impressions, attitudes, as well as thoughts (Dörnyei, 2007). The latter, longitudinal retrospective because in these kind of studies “data are gathered during a single investigation in which respondents are asked to

think back and answer questions about the past” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 84). Although Dörnyei (2007) states that one of the shortcomings of such studies is that data can be distorted due to the nature of memories (e.g., forgotten details, emotional bias, or suppression), in the case of the present study this is not a drawback because the research questions aim to explore participants’ dispositions and motivation, rather than actual facts.

3.3. Participants

The population of this thesis was the working or retired Hungarian adults (minimum 21 years of age and not participating in any form of higher education). This choice of age was made based on the fact that not only children or university students are in the process of, or start learning a new foreign language, but adults as well. Hence, it is important to focus on them, too. The nationality of the population was chosen because interviews had to be conducted in the participants’ L1.

The sampling for this interview was done in several steps. First, by way of word-of-mouth potential candidates were sought out. Secondly, when a possible participant was found they were contacted either by email or phone. At this stage the aim and purpose of the study was briefly explained and some questions were posed in order to find out whether they meet the criteria. If the candidate met said criteria, and was willing to participate in the study, a date for the actual interview was set up.

The criteria for participant selection were both homogeneous and criterion based. Firstly, homogeneous because the basic requirement for this study was that the participants’ level of English is either actually low, or is perceived to be so. Hence, participants who felt that they failed to learn English were needed. Secondly, it was also criterion based because all participants had to meet the previously described criteria. In addition, it was opportunistic as well, as two participants were found ‘accidentally’: one participant – Sally – was discovered

during an interview; and another – Alexa – while having an informal conversation with a group of students.

The research was conducted with nine Hungarian participants. Out of the nine participants six were females and three males. All the participants were adults, their ages ranged between early 20s and late 60s: two retirees, two participants in their early 60s, four interviewees between their late 30s and early 40s, and one participant in her early 20s. In terms of education, the participants obtained degrees ranging from high school diplomas to doctorates. For details, please see Table 1. When looking at jobs it can be seen (Table 1) that participants work in extremely varied fields: arts, IT, academic research, veterinary medicine, sales, and office administration.

Table 1

Personal data of participants

	Age	Gender	Highest qualification	Job title
Sue	Late 60s	Female	High school	Secretary
Melissa	Late 60s	Female	Doctorate	Senior veterinarian
George	Early 60s	Male	Bachelor's	Graphic designer
Sally	Early 60s	Female	Masters	CEO
Julia	Early 40s	Female	Doctorate	Associate professor
Barbara	Late 30s	Female	Master's	Team leader
Brian	Late 30s	Male	Master's	Software developer
Matt	Late 30s	Male	Master's	Conservator-restorer
Alexa	Early 20s	Female	Certificate	Office assistant

Looking at the participants' history of language learning, there can be seen a rather consistent pattern. All participants attempted to learn English; some of them are still taking lessons, or are trying to improve their level on their own. The four oldest interviewees also learnt Russian, as at the time it was a compulsory subject. It is also interesting to see that eight

out of the nine participants, at one point in their lives, also studied German. Regarding language certificates, the participants show a varied profile: four of them have no language certificates, three have one, and another two interviewees have two. For detailed breakdown of language learning history, please see Table 2. Another important characteristic that all participants have in common is that all of them are dissatisfied with their level of English.

Table 2

Detailed information on participants' language learning history

	Languages learnt	Language certificates
Sue	Russian, German, English	∅
Melissa	Russian, German, English, Portuguese	English – B2
George	Russian, German, Italian, English	∅
Sally	Russian, German, English	Russian – C2
Julia	German, Italian, Latin, French, English	Italian – B2, German – B2
Barbara	German, French, Latin, Spanish, Romanian, English	German – C1, Romanian – B2
Brian	German, English	∅
Matt	French, English	English – B1
Alexa	German, English	∅

Note. For more details on the participants' language history please see Appendix 1.

3.4. The instrument and its pilot

The instrument of this study was a semi-structured interview guide in Hungarian (the L1 of the participants). This form of interview (as opposed to structured and unstructured ones) was chosen because the aim was to allow participants to fully explore and elaborate on the areas of the research questions without allowing them to go too off-topic. In addition, semi-structured interviews also allow the researcher to follow-up the participants' statements, as well as explore emerging themes. In other words, it restricts neither the researcher, nor the participant.

The interview guide was piloted twice. After the pilot interviews – based on the feedback of the topic supervisor and peers – the questions were slightly altered and rearranged. For example, to the main question *What factors helped or hindered you during your studies?* a sub-question was added: *Which of these were up to you, and which ones were out of your control?* In addition, the original last question – *Are you planning to re/start learning a foreign question* – was changed to *What would help you master English, or any other language?* This was supported with two follow-up questions: one on learning environment and setting, the other a comparison between this ideal setting and the way they had successfully learnt a foreign language. However, the order, and sometimes the wording of questions, were tailored to the flow and rhythm of the interviews.

The finale interview guide had three main parts: four questions regarding personal details; seven questions in connection with language learning history; and five motivational, as well as attributional questions. The core part of the interview focused on the following: attributional dimensions, milieu, linguistic self-confidence and self-determination, as well as instrumental and integrative motivation. For the detailed list of questions, please see Appendix 2.

3.5. Data collection

The data was collected in single sessions recorded interviews. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 situation at the time of the data collection phase (November and December, 2020), all the sessions were either online (Microsoft Teams[©], Skype[©], or Google Meets[©]) or on the phone. The duration of the interviews ranged from approximately half to one and a half hour. If in the data analysis phase of the study information was judged to be incomplete, the participants were contacted either by phone or email for follow-up questions. This happened on two occasions. Once a participant initially did not specify exactly what language

certificates she had, and another participant did not elaborate on why she would not want to learn a language in a group setting.

All the interviews were conducted according to the established ethical standards. Before the interviews all participants gave their consent, which was voluntary. The participants were informed about what they are required to do, the structure and purpose of the interview, as well as the fact that as they are doing the interviews voluntarily, they can at any stage withdraw from it. As well as this, participants were also informed that their data will be handled in confidentiality; i.e., their names will be changed and no personal data will be disclosed – accidentally or willingly – to a third party. In addition, there was no coercive influence as none of the participants were the student of the researcher; moreover, there was no “power relation between the researcher and the potential participants” (Riazi, 2006, p 107).

3.6. Data analysis

The data analysis process had four main stages. First, once the interviews were carried out, the recordings were transcribed. For this an online site – <https://vocalmatic.com> – was used. For an example of a transcribed interview, please see Appendix 3. Next, the transcriptions were checked by comparing them to the audio recording. After this, the full scripts were shortened to notes, translated, and coded according to themes. For sample interview analysis please see Figures 1 to 3 in Appendix 4. And finally, the themes were ordered and synthesised in accordance with the findings of the literature review.

This coding was systematic, but semi-spontaneous. The latter was due the fact that although there were three existing themes that were purposefully explored – hindering and facilitating factors while learning a foreign language, teachers, and parents –, participants were encouraged to share as many details as possible and were also allowed to go off topic. The coding was done according to the following steps. Each interview was read one by one.

The emerging themes of the first read interview were colour coded. Then, in the course of reading the following interviews if similar themes were found, they were marked according to the original code; and if new themes emerged, new a code was introduced. For sample coding system please see Appendix D. Once the coding was completed, they were organised according to larger themes. There were seven of these: ability, linguistic self-confidence, and effort; parents; teachers; peers; tasks, activities topics, and materials; cultural interest and foreign setting, as well as general reasons for learning languages. For detailed list of emerging themes please see Table 3. And finally, the data was sorted according to the emerging themes and cross referenced with the literature. During several stages of the analysis an expert, the topic supervisor, gave comments and feedback on the process.

Table 3

List of emerging themes

Themes	Times mentioned
The learner	29
Good language learning ability	7
Lack of language learning ability	2
Linguistic self-confidence	3
Effort	7
Lack of effort	10
Parents	12
Supportive	7
Negative effects	5
Teachers	16
Motivating factors	9
Demotivating factors	7
The lessons	30
Tasks and activities	23
Topics and materials	7
Peers	6
Motivating	3
Demotivating	3
Cultural interest	9
Existing	4
Lack of	2
Neutral	3

Reasons for learning languages	14
Work	6
Media usage	3
Travel	5

4. Results

Although the participants general English language knowledge varied a great deal – ranging from virtually no measurable knowledge (Sue) to B1 (Melissa and Julia) –, none of them were satisfied with their proficiency level. Accordingly, the study sought to find out with what the participants explain their perceived failure in acquiring a to them satisfactory level of English, as well as the reasons behind their successes in learning a foreign language other than English. However, it is important to note that in this context failure does not mean that the participants failed to pass a language exam (standardised or other). Rather, it refers to their perception that although they had tried to learn English, they feel that they have not managed to do so; even if they can in fact communicate in English at a certain level.

4.1. The learner

During the course of the interviews all participants mentioned their language learning ability, the effort they had put in, as well as their linguistic self-confidence when they talked about why they had either succeeded or failed to learn a foreign language. Lack of effort was mentioned most frequently (ten times), then ability and effort (both seven times), and finally linguistic self-confidence (three times).

4.1.1. Ability and linguistic self-confidence

In the current study only one participant – Sally – claimed that her good language learning ability considerably helped her during her studies. She said that all her language teachers told her she had exceptional abilities in the area of language learning. She also stated that this was something that ran in the family: both her parents and her sister were, and are good at languages. Although Matt never received explicit positive feedback regarding his language learning abilities, he said the following: “I don’t need English at this point in my life, but I think I could learn it easily. When I focused on it before graduation, my English improved quickly.” Julia also expressed a certain kind of linguistic self-confidence. She said that she enjoys learning languages and she finds it “fairly easy”. These can be seen as indicators of strong linguistic self-confidence (Dörnyei et al., 2006). Studies – for example Csizér and Kormos (2008) or Liu and Chu (2010) – have found this has great importance when learning foreign languages. In addition, linguistic self-confidence can also be the source of intrinsic motivation: because the learner knows they can achieve their goals, they will enjoy the activity, which in this case is learning a language. A good example of the lack of linguistic self-confidence is George: he explicitly stated that he is not good at learning languages, and his proof is that he has not managed to reach a higher level than A1 in any foreign language.

In contrast, at the beginning of the interviews both Sue and Melissa stated that they are not very talented in the area of learning foreign languages. However, later on they said that once they were in a foreign speaking environment their language skills improved quickly. For Sue this was English in Oman, and for Melissa German in Germany, Portuguese in Brazil, and English in Zambia. Melissa also said that while being abroad, she picked up the languages effortlessly. This could be in fact the indicator of good language learning abilities. However, this could also mean that the immediate need to communicate in a foreign language can

induce people to put in more effort to learn their target language. Alternatively, it could also indicate the importance of cultural contact. This last point will be further discussed later.

When looking at the attributional dimensions (Weiner, 2010), it seems that all participants who mentioned ability see it as an internal disposition. In addition – with the exception of Julia – they also seem to see it as a stable and uncontrollable dimension. Brian is a good example of this. He said, right at the beginning of the interview, that he feels he is not good at learning languages because he is “too rational” and wants to categorise everything according to rules, which – in his opinion – cannot be done with languages. As Julia said that the more she practices, the easier the language learning gets, she could see ability as something that can be controlled.

4.1.2. Effort

As per Weiner’s (2010) attributional categories; regarding effort, all participants claimed that at one point in their life they all put in a considerable amount of effort to learn a foreign language. However, it was only Alexa (German) and Julia (Italian) who said that their ultimate success in learning a foreign language was due to their effort. Alexa talked about how much she practiced when she was in secondary school, and Julia explained that at university she spent long hours studying and trying to understand complicated Italian texts.

Matt and Brian reported somewhat similar experiences. Both of them said that when they had to pass exams (not accredited B1 language exam and high school graduation exam, respectively) they put in a lot of effort, which at the time paid off as both of them passed their exams with good grades. However, despite their past success, both Matt and Brian stated at the time of the interviews their level of English was very low. For Matt and Brian motivation to put in effort was extrinsic: they studied hard, because they had to pass an exam in order to

successfully finish their studies. However, once this immediate need was removed they stopped learning English.

It is very interesting to note that although George claims that he had put in a vast amount of effort to learn English, up to the time of the interview, he felt that he had failed. Not only did he enrol in several language courses and hire private teachers, he also bought numerous language books (“At one point I had about 60 coursebooks, including workbooks.”) and nearly all available language learning applications (e.g., Quizlet and Duolingo).

Seven participants also reported that at one point they knowingly, and sometimes deliberately did not make any effort to learn a foreign language. Melissa stated that because it was compulsory, she purposefully neglected her Russian studies. She put in the bare minimum in order not to fail the class, but refused to use the language. Accordingly, she claims that although she took Russian lessons for almost a decade, her level is virtually zero. Melissa – and Barbara as well – also said that due to their pre-existing strong German knowledge they did not make any effort to improve their skills in secondary school: what they already knew was enough to get good grades; and in the case of Barbara to pass a language exam and get admission to university. As well as this, Barbara also said that during her teens, due to her father and teachers – reasons that will be discussed in detail later – she did not put in any effort to learn English. Matt and Brian also stated that during high school they neglected their language studies. Brian because he did not see the point of learning languages, and Matt because his parents were much too insistent on him spending all his time studying. This will be further discussed in the next section. Brian also stated that although he needs to improve his English (due to his work), at the moment he cannot put in effort to do so because he has too much work and he also has a family. George also reported that he purposefully disregarded his German studies both during his secondary school and university studies. In both cases this was because of institutional reasons, which will be discussed in detail in the

upcoming sub-chapters. Finally, Julia also said that she could put in more effort to improve her English, but as she too works a lot and has a family, she focuses her language studies on the areas that are immediately relevant to her work: she also explicitly stated that she has no desire to reach an advanced level in English.

Accordingly, it can be seen that all participants see effort as a controllable and unstable dimension (Weiner, 2010). However, in terms of the internal/external and controllable/uncontrollable dimension effort seems to be rather complex. Although all participants said that they were the ones who chose to either invest energy in learning a language or not to do so, the reasons were often external. Alexa and Melissa, for example, put in considerable effort to learn German and English respectively, because they were in an environment where they either learnt the language or they did not communicate with anyone. Matt chose not to study languages because of his parents, and Melissa because it was politically compulsory to do so. However, when the circumstances demanded Matt and Brian to put in effort, they did so, just like Alexa, Melissa, and Sue. Hence it can be seen that although the choices were made by the participants, the catalyst behind these decisions and choices were mostly external. In addition, when these external reasons ceased to exist, the participants stopped their language studies.

Hence, when participants expressed their views explaining their perceived insufficient levels of English and when they explained the differences in their levels of English and another language effort seems to have been a very important factor: the lack of in terms of perceived failure, and strong presence in terms of success. George seems to be the only exception from this: although for years he had put in a lot of effort to master English, to his mind, he had failed to do so.

4.2. Parents

All participants reported supportive parents in the area of general studies, and accordingly, in their foreign language studies as well. This support was mostly in the form of extra language courses. However, none of the participants said that their parents were particularly insistent or forceful when it came to learning languages. Generally speaking, all the interviewees were given the freedom to choose – when possible – their foreign languages, and there were no negative consequences when they did not achieve a high level of proficiency. Having said that, three interviewees – Matt, Barbara and George – also reported negative effects of parental pressure.

Four participants stated that in one form or another their parents gave extra support in the area of language learning. Barbara's and Julia's parents enrolled them in German kindergartens, and later in schools that had specialised language courses. Melissa's parents found her a German penfriend; and during her elementary school years, sent her to Germany for summer holidays. Brian's, Julia's, and Matt's parents enrolled them in after-school language courses. Barbara and Melissa said that these experiences were the main reasons behind their success in learning German. The others did not report any outstanding results of parental support.

Barbara, Matt and George reported negative influences from their parents. Barbara's parents got divorced, and while her mother was generally speaking laid-back when it came to her studies, her father was extremely insistent on her learning English. And as she did not, and does not have a good relationship with her father, this resulted in her hating and resenting English: "His family wrote dictionaries and everyone spoke English and he wanted me to be like that; I hated it".

In case of Matt, although he does not remember his parents being particularly strict in the area of language learning, they were very much so in his general studies: "I was not

allowed to do anything after school, I had to go home and study. Even if my grades were good”. Until he graduated from high school, he was not allowed to have any hobbies: extracurricular activities, such as joining the school basketball team or the drama club, were forbidden. After school he was forced to be in his room from 3 pm to 7 pm studying. In elementary school, during his summer holidays, he had to start his days with reading the compulsory books. He said that this was so demotivating for him that he purposefully neglected all his studies just to rebel against his parents. Looking back, Matt would have liked his parents to be more flexible and trusting:

We could have worked out a system. For example, I do the reading after lunch, not in the morning when the sun is shining and I’m all ready for adventures in the forest. And if as long as I had good grades, why couldn’t I have played basketball?

He also said that his parents should have explained to him why learning languages – English in particular – is important. Brian also mentioned this last point: “They didn’t explain to me why languages are important. Now as an adult with two children I don’t have the time to learn English”.

In a slightly different way, George also reported hindrance from his parents. He went to school in the 1960s and according to him there was a shortage in language teachers. Therefore, the teachers at his school asked the parents to actively discourage their children from learning languages. As a result of this teacher shortage, students were told that if they wanted, instead of participating in the language classes, they could go play football. George took this opportunity. Interestingly, despite of this, George is still very keen on learning English.

All of the above listed experiences and views are very good examples of how the environmental factors can affect self-determination both negatively and positively (Deci & Ryan, 1985). According to Deci and Ryan (1985), the freedom to choose an activity, is

integral part of self-determination, and this is especially dominant in the case of Julia. In her third year of high school, she had to start a new foreign language, and was given the opportunity to choose that language, which was Italian. She later went to studying it at university, and ultimately getting a master's degree in Italian. This motivating effect of parents is also in line with the findings of Kormos and Csizér (2005). Interestingly, although Sue reported that her parents were always supportive of and satisfied with her language learning, she never reached high levels of proficiency in any language.

In terms of negative effects and demotivation, Noels (2001) asserts that people tend to lose motivation if their significant others are not supportive enough. Brian is a good example of this: although his parents enrolled him in extra classes, they never fully explained to him why learning languages is important. In addition, Noels (2001) also says that people can rarely be motivated with threats and imposed goals. This is in line with Matt's and Barbara's behaviour. Noels (2001) calls this, within the category of extrinsic motivation, external regulation.

Furthermore, regarding attribution, it is clear that Barbara, Matt, Brian and George explain their failure, at least in part, with uncontrollable, stable, and extrinsic factors: their parents. This is in line with Williams and Burden's (1997), as well as Hegtvedt and Johnson's (2017) findings. They say that in order to make themselves appear in better light people tend to externalise the reasons of failure. This is what Hegtvedt and Johnson (2017) call self-serving bias. This is especially true in the case of Matt and Barbara: both of them explicitly stated that one of the reasons why they never mastered English was the attitude of their parents.

Hence, it can be seen that parents – external motivation – had a role in both the successes and failures of the participants. Julia was motivated to learn Italian because she was given the freedom of choice. Barbara, Julia, and Melissa mastered German because their

parents enrolled them in courses; or in the case of Melissa, sent them abroad at an early age. Matt and Barbara, in part, failed to learn English because their parents were much too insistent. Brian and Matt maintain that if their parents had explained to them better why learning English is important, they would have put in more effort in their formative years.

4.3. Teachers

As with parents, all participants talked about the role of their teachers in their success and failure in learning languages. Interestingly, even after extensive prompting, only Julia and Alexa had nothing negative to say about any of their language teachers. All other participants reported both motivating and demotivating experiences in connection with their teachers.

Sue, Melissa, and Brian stated that their language learning abilities are not the best. However, when living abroad Sue progressed rapidly. This could mean that while there was nothing wrong with her abilities, her teachers might not have found the best way to help her learn. This seems to be supported by the fact that Sue reported that while her high school English teacher was “lukewarm, nothing special, forgettable” her Russian teacher was “great” and accordingly, her Russian improved faster than her English. Brian said that he is unable to accept and understand English grammatical structures because they cannot be related to Hungarian ones. However, in reality, this might not be his fault: there is in fact a good chance that it was his teachers who were unable to explain the rules to him well. In other words, both Sue and Brian believe that, at least to some extent, they are the reason why they could not master English. This is in line with what Hegtvedt and Johnson (2017) call fundamental attribution errors: people believe their failure was due to internal factors, when in fact they happened because of external ones.

Nearly all participants had demotivating experiences in connection with their teachers. George and Sally talked extensively about the inflexibility of their teachers. George said the

following about his English teachers: “I asked them to bring topics on art and design, but they insisted on continuing with the book”. George also said that his teachers showed very little enthusiasm in their subject: “I could see they were bored, they didn’t want to be there”. In addition, his German teacher at university simply did not show up to the lessons. Sally was even more outspoken when it came to criticising her teachers: “It’s the teacher’s responsibility to motivate the students. My teachers at the [English] language school failed to do so. Therefore, a lot of us just dropped out after the first semester”. George shared her views: “Teachers should pique the students’ interest. They should motivate them.” Barbara also complained that her private English teachers were inconsistent and that her (Barbara’s) actions had no consequences whatsoever: “If I didn’t do my homework, nothing happened; I didn’t even get told off”. Therefore, she said that “I couldn’t take the lessons seriously; all we did was fool around with silly games”. According to Matt, his high school English teacher was a bit lazy and was often unprepared: “We knew that sometimes the only reason we had surprise tests, was that he didn’t prepare for the lessons”. He described his French high school teachers as “old, bitter, and extremely demotivating”. These are good examples of extrinsic demotivating factors on Dörnyei’s (1994) Learning Situation Level.

However, despite the above discussed points, all but one participant – George – also had positive things to say about their language teachers. Sally and Julia – who reached high levels in Russian and Italian, respectively – said that one of the most motivating things about their teachers were their love of the culture. They both said it was apparent that their teachers were in love with Russian and Italian culture, and they managed to communicate this feeling to their students. Sally said that “my high school teacher gave us a peak into a mysterious and foreign world, we loved it”. According to Julia “it was apparent that [her] Italian teacher was in love with Italy”. This was also true for her English teacher, who for example “adored the

royal family”. In these cases, the teachers managed to generate interest in the culture of the target language, which in turn helped develop motivation.

Being a competent, organised and well-prepared teacher as a source of motivation was mentioned by Matt and Brian. Matt said the following about his summer school teacher: “At the beginning of the lesson he told us what was going to happen and why. We knew what was coming next. All his lessons were well-structured and clear”. Alexa on the other hand put emphasis on the helpfulness and kindness of her German teachers. Brian and Barbara said that the fact that their teachers were strict helped them study. In the case of Brian, his teacher “single-mindedly” focused on preparing him for a language exam: “We did nothing but practice the exam tasks”; and regarding Barbara, her summer school teacher regularly threatened campers to send them home if they used languages other than German: “I didn’t dare speak Hungarian”. Finally, although she has lost her Russian, Sue said that her high school teacher was young and enthusiastic, which was a strong motivating force for her. These are good examples of when external regulation (Noels, 2001) can be motivating.

In terms of feedback from the teachers, Alexa and Sally were the only ones who said that their teachers praised them regularly. Alexa stated that this was very motivating for her. Sally revealed that all her high school teachers praised her for her exceptional talent in languages. The other participants do not remember getting any feedback from their language teachers other than their grades. Sue also said that “back then it was not customary to give feedback other than grades”. Although Julia said she did not receive explicit feedback either, she reported that being able to complete tasks and being praised for them was motivating for her. Ergo, setting tasks that are challenging, yet doable, can be a source of motivation.

All participants reported teachers to be either motivating or demotivating: none of them said their teachers did not affect their learning processes. In addition, a lot of participants – in line with Nikolov (2001) – explicitly stated that in part their failure to learn a foreign

language was due to their teacher. This is also in line with Thorner and Kikuchi's (2019) findings, i.e., teachers can be demotivating influences. However, Williams and Burden's (1997) theory that generally speaking people attribute their successes to internal reasons, and their failures to external ones does not seem to be fully supported here: teachers are clearly external factors, yet Julia, Sally and Alexa attribute parts of their successes to their teachers. In terms of other attributional dimensions (Weiner, 2010), most interviewees – as they talked about state school and language school teachers – probably regarded teachers as uncontrollable and extrinsic factors: none of the interviewees said that they (or their parents) tried to change unsatisfactory teachers. However, when asked what he could have done differently in the past when learning English, George said he “shouldn't have tried to study with [his] teachers”. This implies that George perceives teachers to be controllable factors.

4.4. The lessons: Tasks, activities, topics and materials

As all nine participants took part in courses in minimum two languages where their teachers introduced tasks, activities, topics and materials to them. These courses were state school lessons, language school course, university programmes, or private teachers. The participants' experiences in connection with tasks, activities, topics and materials were both positive and negative. The topics, activity and task types covered and discussed in these courses showed the same patterns as the teachers: those who achieved higher levels were motivated by them; those who did not, found them boring and ineffective.

In terms of their English studies, all participants stated that they had no, or very little real-life conversations in their elementary or high school lessons. George and Brian said similar things about their private and language school teachers. All interviewees found the lack of free speaking activities extremely demotivating and said that this is one of the reasons they cannot speak English properly today. In addition, four interviewees – Sue, Melissa,

George, and Sally – said that the topics of the lessons were boring. For example, George said: “I was not interested in the Queen’s dogs, so why did we have to read and talk about them for several lessons?” Two third of the participants – Sue, Melissa, Matt, Barbara, George and Sally – said that they found the usual coursebook activities (e.g., matching and gap fill) as well as the classroom tasks (e.g., translation and dictations) tedious, demotivating, and useless. Sue, George, Sally, and Brian also said they felt that the topics, tasks, as well as set conversations covered in the lessons did not reflect real life and were not useful in actual conversations. Sue also said that she would have liked more free speaking activities. George complained that his teachers “did not speak English like normal people, they pronounced everything differently; it wasn’t how people speak on Netflix”. He also said that not once did he have to “fill in gaps or connect sentence halves when communicating with people in English”. According to Brian “the set conversations [they] learnt at school can’t be used in real life”.

However, there were several activity and task types that the participants praised. Melissa greatly enjoyed, and feels she benefited from chatting with her teacher one to one. Sally and Julia enjoyed creative and problem-solving activities. Sally said that they “read Russian short stories or articles, then discussed them like [they] did in literature classes; it was great!”. Both Melissa and Matt said they liked listening to songs during the lessons. Matt reported that once their homework was “to listen to a Dire Straits song, then translate the lyrics; it was awesome!” Sally, Julia, and Barbara also expressed pleasure in reading long authentic texts in their language lessons. Barbara said: “The German textbook readings in Hungary were a joke. By third grade I was reading German books in Romania. We did nothing like this in Hungary.” For Alexa, the most beneficial activities were the ones that did not follow any of the usual classroom themes: “We just did stuff together with our private teachers: we cooked, went to the pool, or played games” (not language games).

Dörnyei (1994), Weiner (2010) Kálmán and Gutierrez Eugenio (2015) all talk about the importance of tasks, activities, topics and materials in the context of education in general, and language learning in particular. This is in line with what the participants reported: all of them attributed both their successes and failures to tasks, activities, topics and materials. In this area most interviewees expressed a sort of helplessness: even if they did not like the materials, tasks, or activities; they did not report saying anything to the teacher. In this context tasks were external and uncontrollable (Weiner, 2010). This is also a clear sign of the lack of autonomy, which can have demotivation effects (Reeve, 2002). However, George and Sally tried, unsuccessfully, to tell their teachers that they wanted different tasks, topics, and activities. Meaning, they tried to take control. Julia is the best example of this category being controllable. She has a private teacher, and during the lessons they only focus on areas that are of interest and importance to her: presentations, networking, and writing scientific articles.

4.5. Peers

Some of the participants also talked about peers as both motivating and demotivating factors. Alexa said the following: “My school mates were so nice! They would take me out after school to practice German. They also helped a lot by explaining things I didn’t understand.” Sue also said that for her the ideal learning environment would be a small group of students where her peers could “pull” her. Melissa, George, and Sally reported that they found group courses demotivating. When asked why, Melissa said the following: “I don’t want to learn with 20 something children. I’m too old for that. But unfortunately, there are no language courses for seniors like me, at least I haven’t found any”. Both George and Sally said that they “had no patience for others”. Julia also reported that, especially in high school, she sometimes felt anxious to speak foreign languages in front of her class mates because she thought they would judge her if she made mistakes. George’s account was even more severe

than Julia's: he said that he has often been corrected by his peers (all of them Hungarians) while taking part in either work or social events. This resulted in him not using English at all in front of Hungarians. These reports support the importance of milieu in the context of language learning motivation (Dörnyei et al., 2006). More specifically, as Thorner and Kikuchi (2019) state, the attitudes of peers and friends can be demotivating. However, the opposite of this can also be true: in the case of Alexa and Julia, peers had a clearly positive effect on their development.

4.6. Cultural interest

Five participants stated that the reason why they managed to learn their target language was because they either spent time abroad, or they very interested in the culture of their target language. Sally and Julia said that their teachers' (Russian, Italian and English) love of culture rubbed off on them too. Sally, Sue, Alexa, Julia and Melissa said that coming in contact with the L1 speakers of their target language was extremely motivating for them (Noels, 2001; Dörnyei et al., 2006; Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie, 2017).

Sue said that when she briefly lived in the Middle East her English improved rapidly: "I had no choice. No one spoke Hungarian, and if I wanted to talk to anyone while my husband was at work, I had to start speaking English". Melissa said that until she went to native speaking settings, she was not able to use her foreign languages (English in Zambia, German in Germany, and Portuguese in Brazil): "I just picked up the languages, I didn't have to study at all." Sally said that when she stayed in the Netherlands for three months, she almost immediately started speaking English; and had she stayed there a bit longer, she could have learnt Dutch quickly: "It's an easy language. Very much like German." Julia also maintained that she only really learnt Italian when she went there to study for a semester. Julia reported that the locals were "extremely enthusiastic, patient and supportive when [she] spoke Italian

with them; they even complemented [her] on [her] Italian”. However, she never got such support or feedback from native English speakers. This is in line with Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie’s (2017) findings: L1 speakers of a smaller or less widespread language tend to exhibit positive attitudes toward those who try to communicate with them in their mother tongue. Alexa also stated that she started speaking German because she had to: “We moved to Austria. I couldn’t stay silent forever. I had to start speaking.” And finally, Barbara also said that one of the biggest contributing factors to her success in German was that she learnt it as if it was a first language.

4.7. Reasons for learning foreign languages

When looking at general reasons for learning languages, three instrumental motivational dimensions were mentioned: work (six participants), travel (four participants), and media usage (five participants). Interestingly, although most motivational frameworks (e.g., Dörnyei 1994, Noels 2001) distinguish between integrative and instrumental motivation, in the case of the present study’s participants, only the latter seems to be relevant: none of the interviewees expressed interest in relocating to a foreign country. This is in line with Noels (2001) observation: integrative motivation is not immediately important to every learner.

Except for Sue, Melissa, and Matt, all participants said that they need better English skills for their work. Sally said: “I would like to find a foreign partner to invest in my company; and to whom I could later sell my share.” Brian has numerous business partners in Germany and he “would like to be able to socialise with them after [their] meetings”. George, on the other hand, wishes he could say simple things like “yes, I will take care of this today and I’ll send over the sketches as soon as I’m done”. Sue, George, Sally, and Matt expressed a desire to improve their English proficiency so that when travelling abroad they could

communicate with the locals. And finally, as she frequently writes scientific articles and attends international conferences, Julia wants to improve her academic English.

Barbara, Sally, and George also expressed interest in being able to enjoy various forms of English media. George said that he “really want[s] to watch TV shows like *Friends* and *The Big Bang Theory* in English”. The above listed motivational factors seem to support Duff’s (2017) assessment: English is in a dominant position and one of the reasons people learn it is because it has become an intricate part of their daily lives. Julia specifically emphasised that “in today’s world no one can get by without knowing at least some English”.

In terms of motivation to learn Languages other than English, the participants gave a varied answer. Sue said that if she started taking language courses, she would learn either German or French, because her “oldest son lives in Switzerland, and [she] would really like to be able to go to the shops alone when [she] is there.” This is in line with Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie (2017): people often choose to learn a LOTE because of personal reasons. Barbara said that if she had the time, she would restart Spanish: “I feel that that’s my language. It feels so natural.” Sally said that she feels her Russian knowledge has become obsolete and she “should have focused on English [in secondary school] instead”. Sally’s opinion can be seen in Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie’s (2017) study, namely that English often overshadows other languages. However, interestingly, none of the participants mentioned symbolic values or markedness (Duff, 2017) for choosing to learn a language other than English.

It is interesting to note that both George and Sally maintain that the “English that Hungarians speak is not English; it’s a version of English” (Sally). This is in line with Cook’s (1995) point: the knowledge of a foreign language should not be based on it as a first language; it should be treated separately together with all the other languages that the learner speaks.

Although Cook (1995), Duff (2017), Henry (2017), and Ushioda (2017) all emphasise the importance and relevance of multi-competence, only Barbara and Alexa mentioned it during the interviews. Barbara said: “German is part of who I am, I grew into it, and it comes naturally like Hungarian”. Alexa stated the following: “I think in German, my automatic reactions like ‘thank you’ and ‘sorry’ are in German”. However, the other participants seem to treat foreign languages as tools and means to an end, rather than something that is an integral part of who they are. This could be due to two reasons. Firstly, both Barbara and Alexa are at a near native level in German, whereas the other participants’ proficiency levels are considerably lower. Secondly, the interviewees might regard their languages as separate components of their personalities, and treat them accordingly.

To sum up, it can be seen that for all participants knowing a foreign language, and most often English, is of instrumental value. They would like to, or would have liked to, improve their foreign language skills in order to perform an activity successfully, for example communicate with foreign business partners, enjoy a television show, or do daily tasks (e.g., shopping). None of the participants expressed interest in integrating into a foreign community, hence integrative motivation in their cases is irrelevant.

5. Discussion

After describing the emerging themes, in this section of my thesis I will answer the research questions.

5.1. What were participants' views about their motivation to master a foreign language other than English?

Although the details vary, both extrinsic and intrinsic were important motivational dimensions that aided participants in succeeding to master a foreign language other than English. The extrinsic motivational dimensions were parents, teachers, tasks and topics, and the necessity to communicate. The most frequently mentioned intrinsic factors were enjoyment, self-determination, as well as family heritage.

First and foremost, the participants' parents had a dominant role: Julia and Barbara were enrolled in German kindergartens, Melissa's parents sent her on an exchange program to Germany, and Alexa's family relocated to Austria where she went to a local elementary and secondary school. Julia, on the other hand, talked about parental encouragement to start a Romance language: her father spoke Spanish, and even lived in Spain for a couple of years. Julia also stated that her peers at university helped her a great deal to improve her English: whenever there was a difficult text to read, they got together and tried to understand it together. Secondly, Sally, Julia, and Alexa all talked about how the support and encouragement of their teachers helped them learn Russian, Italian, and German respectively. Another important motivational source were the tasks. Sally, Julia, and Barbara all reported doing interesting and challenging activities and tasks, as well as engaging in interesting topics that ultimately led them to learning their target languages. Finally, necessity was also an important motivational dimension. Three participants – Melissa (Portuguese), Julia (Italian), Barbara (German), and Alexa (German) – said that their foreign language knowledge

improved greatly because at one point in their lives they had no choice but to use the language if they wanted to communicate with the people around them. This is a good example of when learning happens due to being with and watching members of the target language community. In other words, in this case motivation is a sociocultural conception (Woolfolk, 2016): direct and quality interaction with the community of the target language had a motivating effect (Noels, 2001).

In terms of intrinsic motivation, Barbara talked about family heritage. Although the literature usually puts family into the category of milieu (e.g., Dörnyei et al., 2006), for Barbara this is in the intrinsic dimension: her family is Saxon on her maternal grandfather's side; hence, German had always been part of who she was. Sally and Julia, on the other hand, stated that their teachers' love of the target language's culture motivated them greatly: they internalised their teachers' love of the culture, which in turn developed into intrinsic motivation. As well as this, Julia also said that that she chose Italian freely, which developed her self-determination. Alexa, Julia, and Sally also highlighted the fact that they greatly enjoyed learning their target languages; and accordingly they achieved success.

5.2. In their view, what motivation did the participants lack that led to them not being able to master English at a level they would have desired to do so?

Based on the number of times they were mentioned and the amount of time participants spent talking about them; here, the complete lack of intrinsic motivation, language enjoyment, or necessity were the most dominant reasons. First of all – with the exception Julia, who reported general language learning enjoyment – none of the participants expressed interest in the language itself or the culture of the countries where English is the native language. Secondly, whenever the participants reported improvement in their English it was due to an immediate external reason: Sue, Melissa, Sally, and Julia said that their English improved

when they were in situations where they either used the language or became isolated; Barbara's, Brian's, Matt's, and Alexa's efforts lasted until they passed necessary exams and classes. However, once these external causes were removed, all the participants ceased to learn or improve their English. In other words, short term extrinsic motivation was not enough to maintain the participants efforts to achieve high levels of proficiency in English (Lamb, 2019). This is also true for Julia: although she does use English frequently, she has no interest in improving it further, as she feels her current knowledge is enough for her to get by. Which is a clear indicator of instrumental motivation: she is learning English because she needs it for her work. However, effort is limited to the extent that it: once she felt that her English knowledge is sufficient to properly perform her job, she stopped investing extra energy into the learning process.

Having said that, even though for Brian, George, and Sally instrumental motivation is clearly present, it does not seem to be strong enough to motivate them to improve their English: all of them stated that although having a better command of the language would help them in their work and their hobbies, they do not wish to actively improve their English. Looking at this from the perspective of the social cognitive approaches of motivation (Woolfolk, 2016), it can be said that for Brian, George, and Sally even though the value of learning English is high, the cost is even higher; hence, they are not motivated to master it. However, for Matt not only is the cost too high, but the value and the likelihood of success are low (Woolfolk, 2016). In addition, Brian and Matt also stated that one of the reasons why they did not focus on learning English while they had the chance (i.e., during their high school years and early 20s), was that their parents did not explain to them why learning languages in general, and English in particular, would be useful for them in the future, i.e., they did not fully comprehend its value.

5.3. What views do participants express when explaining their perceived insufficient levels of English?

In addition to the lack of intrinsic motivation participants attributed their perceived insufficient levels of English to demotivating external reasons. Firstly, all the participants talked about classroom activities and tasks that had no communicative value in real life; for example, gap fills, matching activities, or set conversations that cannot be used in everyday interactions. As per Boekaerts' (2002) task evaluation dimensions, this means that these participants on the one hand did not enjoy the activities, and on the other hand they did not see their value. Secondly, four participants – Sue, Melissa, George and Sally – also reported that the topics they covered (e.g., the royal family and their pets) were of no interest to them. In addition, four participants – George, Matt, Barbara, and Sally – explicitly talked about teachers as a reason why they never managed to master English. These reasons were laziness, inflexibility, lack of consequences, as well as the inability to motivate learners. Matt and Barbara also talked about parental influences; more specifically, both of them neglected their English studies as an act of rebellion: Matt because his parents were extremely insistent on him studying, and Barbara because she had (and still has) a strained relationship with her father. This is in line with Noels' (2001) findings that imposed goals, directives, or threats can have demotivating effects. George also talked about how the attitude of his peers could, and still can be, extremely demotivating for him. He said that in situations where he has to communicate in English in front of Hungarian colleagues, said colleagues often criticise his English and interrupt him to correct his mistakes. He stated that this has resulted in him simply not speaking English in front of Hungarians. Finally, although the participants' motivation to learn English was instrumental, it was mostly instrumentality-prevention (Dörnyei & Usioda, 2011). This means that Sue, Sally, Brian, Matt, and Alexa only continued to learn English until there was a threat that if they do not do so, they will fail the class or

course. Accordingly, once this threat was removed – the course ended or they finished secondary school – they stopped learning English.

5.4. What explanations do participants give to the differences in their levels of English and another language?

Out of the nine participants four said that their level of English was worse than that of another language. With the exception of Melissa, the source of this difference can be found on the intrinsic and extrinsic continuum. Melissa said that both her German and Portuguese – at one point in her life – was better than her English. She said that, as opposed to English, this was due to the fact that she never learnt these languages in a classroom setting: she spent time in countries where German and Portuguese were the first language and consequently, she picked it up through everyday conversations and communication. Sally reported that although she has lost most of it, her English has never, and will never be as strong as her Russian. She said that this was due to her teachers and the lessons themselves. While her Russian teacher was highly enthusiastic and used interesting materials and topics, her English teachers did not. In addition, she also stated that she started learning English too late. While Barbara's reasons were on the one hand external – her father, the teachers, and the methods; on the other hand, they were emotional as well. In addition, while she had nothing bad to say about either her German or English teachers and studies in Romania, she had next to no positive comments on the same topic in Hungarian context. Furthermore, Barbara also stated that learning German was natural for her, as it was part of who she is. Alexa, on the other hand, attributed her C2 level in German and A2 level in English to her living situation: the reason why she mastered German was because she moved to Austria with her family; and while her English teachers were good, she never really had to use the language. It is also important to note, that while Sally, Julia, Barbara, and Alexa talk about how they enjoyed learning other languages, none

of the participants expressed such feelings in connection with English. Therefore, while four participants were intrinsically motivated to learn another language, none were to learn English (Noels, 2001).

6. Conclusion

In the light of the previous two sections, this study has several implications:

1. Even unsuccessful learners, at one point in their lives, have probably put in effort to learn a foreign language. This means that their failure might not be due to laziness or disinterest, but rather unfortunate circumstances.
2. Seemingly uncontrollable factors can be controlled. Ability can be developed through attitude. Teachers can be changed. As well as this, seemingly impossible problems can be solved with help.
3. Emotions play an important role in learning. Some deep running emotions, like Barbara and her father's relationship, are outside of the control of a teacher.
4. Even among adults, the milieu – for example, parents, teachers, and classrooms – plays a vital part in learning.
5. Personalised topics, activities and materials can be extremely motivating.
6. Learning a language in a native setting, where learners have no choice but to use it, is extremely effective.
7. A meaningful reason to use a foreign language (e.g., Sally in the Middle East) can be a strong external motivational factor.

The main limitation of this study is that the participants came from a varied age group. This means that their initial language learning experiences were extremely different due to the

different political and economic eras they grew up in. Accordingly, the results of comparing learning a foreign language in Hungary in the 1960s and the 1990s might not be entirely reliable.

A possible further research project could be duplicating this study in a different, preferably foreign context. This way, some light could be shed on how people from other countries attribute their successes and failures. In addition, a quantitative study in same the topic could also yield interesting results.

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Appendix A

Details of the Participants' Language Learning History

Table A1

Sue

Languages	Russian	English
Started (age)	10	12
Duration (years)	8	10
Frequency	2x a week (only at school)	on and off after high school (2-4x a week)
Current level	0	A1
Language use	no	a bit in Switzerland → son lives there
Language exam	Ø	Ø

Table A2

Melissa

Languages	Russian	German	Portuguese	English
Started (age)	5 th grade	7 th grade	31	27
Duration (years)	9	5-6	actively half	2
Frequency	does not remember	elementary: German old lady 1x a week; from 7 th grade 4x in Germany for 3-4 weeks; high school 4x week	private teacher 1x a week (picked up the rest)	1-2x a week (course)
Current level	0	A1-A2	0	B1
Language use	no	informally with old penfriend	no	- reading - movies - informal chats
Language exam	Ø	Ø	Ø	B2

Table A3*Sally*

Languages	German	Russian	English
Started (age)	6	11	20
Duration (years)	6	9	3
Frequency	2x a week	5x a week	4x a week
Current level	A2-B1	A1-A2	B1
Language use	No	No	travelling; work
Language exam	Ø	C2	Ø

Table A4*Barbara*

Languages	German	English	French	Romanian	Spanish	Latin
Started (age)	4-5	7	14	0	20	30
Duration (years)	from kindergarten to university	3 + periodical tries	4	5	3	1
Frequency	every day	2x a week	4x a week	every day in lower elementary	2x a week	1x a week
Current level	C2	A1	0	B2	A1	0 (used to be awesome)
Language use	every day → working language	not much internet Youtube	no	with family in front of child so she will not understand	no	no
Language exam	C1	Ø	Ø	B2	Ø	Ø

Table A5*Brian*

Languages	English	German
Started (age)	14	6
Duration (years)	8	12
Frequency	2x a week	2x a week
Current level	A1-A2	0
Language use	yes, work	no
Language exam	high school leaving exam	Ø

Table A6**George**

Languages	Russian	Italian	English	German
Started (age)	10	30	25-26	18
Duration (years)	5	3 months	still learning 2x a week private teacher: - 6 months - 8 months	4
Frequency	- 4x a week - specialised class	self-study	not regular	2x a week
Current level	0	no measurable level	no measurable level	0
Language use	no	no	with foreigners, and movies	no
Language exam	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø

Table A7*Julia*

Languages	German	English	Italian	Francia
Started (age)	3-4	11	14	no information
Duration (years)	10	still learning	7	no information
	from kindergarten to high school			
Frequency	specialised German program in elementary	now 1x a week	no information	no information
Current level	A2-B1	B1-B2	B2	A1
Language use	No	work	work	no
Language exam	B2	B2	MA diploma	Ø

Table A8*Alexa*

Languages	German	English
Started (age)	6	11
Duration (years)	12	7, then restarted not long ago
Frequency	every day	does not remember
Current level	C2	A2
Language use	every day – lives in Austria	work – few times a week
Language exam	Ø	Ø

Table A9*Matt*

Languages	French	English
Started (age)	14	12
Duration (years)	4	5-6
Frequency	2x a week	does not remember
Current level	0	A1
Language use	no	no
Language exam	Ø	B1

Appendix B

Interview Questions

(English translation)

1. Personal details

1.1. Name

1.2. Age

1.3. Gender

1.4. Job title

1.5. Educational background

2. Language learning history

2.1. What languages have you learnt/are learning?

2.2. What age did you start them?

2.3. How long did you study/have you studied them?

2.4. How many lessons did/do you have per week? Did you take part in specialised language program during your high school studies?

2.5. What do you think is your current level in the languages you have learnt/are learning?

2.6. Do you use any of the languages nowadays? In what context?

2.7. Have you got any language certificates?

3. Motivational and attributional questions

3.1. To your mind, are you a successful language learner? Why/not?

3.2. What factors helped or hindered you during your studies?

3.2.1. Which of these were up to you, and which ones were out of your control?

3.2.2. What could you have differently to facilitate your own learning?

3.3. Tell me about your teachers.

3.3.1. What kind of people were they?

3.3.2. What type of tasks and activities did you do during the lessons?

3.3.3. What kind of feedback did they give you?

3.4. What was your parent's opinion, take, attitude towards your language learning?

3.5. What would help you master English, or any other language?

3.5.1. What would be your ideal language learning environment?

3.5.2. Is this how you learnt your other language?

Appendix C

Transcribed Interview Sample

- Kata Szerinted te sikeres angol nyelvtanuló vagy?
- Brian Hát ez jó kérdés... Nem.
- Kata És miért?
- Brian Mert túl racionálisan akarom megközelíteni a dolgot.
- Kata Ezt, hogy érted? Ezt kérlek fejts ki egy kicsit bővebben.
- Brian Hát, hogy mindent szabályok közé akarok húzni, és mindent szabályok szerint akarok értelmezni és van amit például... például nem lehet így bekatégorizálni a nyelvbe.
- Brian Tudsz erre esetleg példát mondani?
- Kata Hát mit tudom én... Az igeidők. Akkor a... a present perfect. Nem tudom, amik ugye egy kicsit olyan megfoghatatlanok. És nem átfordíthatóak például a... a magyar nyelvre. Vagy nem lehet analógiát a kettő közé kapcsolni.
- Brian És csak ez, vagy valami más oka is van esetleg?
- Kata Nem tudom. Az is lehet, hogy személyiség függő is. Hogy... Hogy az élőbeszéd az nehezen megy. Mert először magyarul megfogalmazom, és utána próbálom angolra átforgatni. De az úgy nem működik, mert az úgy egy lassú folyamat.
- Kata És milyen más tényezők járultak hozzá, hogy nem sikerült annyira megtanulnod angolul, mint, ahogy szeretted volna?
- Brian Amikor fixen volt a heti két angol, akkor valószínűleg több energiát kellett volna befektetni. Meg többet kellett volna vele foglalkozni.
- Kata És miért nem fektettél bele több energiát, és miért nem foglalkoztál vele többet?
- Brian Mert az ember azt gondolta, hogy még van idő, és még úgyis lesz idő ezzel foglalkozni. Csak aztán az idő eltelt. Igazából most az elmúlt egy évben került elő a dolog, úgy, hogy, itt az üzleti megbeszélések, meg egyéb miatt, hogy a szöveges tárgyalóképes angolt egy év alatt... azt mindenképp össze kell szedni. Most napi renden van, hogy újra ennek neki kell futni mindenképp.
- Kata Tehát nem fektettél bele elég energiát. Még valami?
- Brian Hát az, hogy később meg nem volt rá elég idő. Meg energia. Meg erőforrás.

Appendix D

Sample Interview Analysis

Table D1

Coding system

Themes	
The learner	The lessons
<u>Good language learning ability</u>	<u>Tasks and activities</u>
<u>Lack of language learning ability</u>	<u>Topics and materials</u>
<u>Linguistic self-confidence</u>	Peers
<u>Effort</u>	<u>Motivating</u>
<u>Lack of effort</u>	<u>Demotivating</u>
Parents	Cultural interest
<u>Supportive</u>	<u>Existing</u>
<u>Negative effects</u>	<u>Lack of</u>
Teachers	<u>Neutral</u>
<u>Motivating factors</u>	Reasons for learning languages
<u>Demotivating factors</u>	<u>Work</u>
	<u>Media usage</u>
	<u>Travel</u>

Figure D1

Example of coded interview

- Kata Szerinted te sikeres angol nyelvtanuló vagy?
- Brian Hát ez jó kérdés... **Nem.**
- Kata És miért?
- Brian **Mert túl racionálisan akarom megközelíteni a dolgot.**
- Kata Ezt, hogy érted? Ezt kérlek fejts ki egy kicsit bővebben.
- Brian **Hát, hogy mindent szabályok közé akarok húzni, és mindent szabályok szerint akarok értelmezni** és van amit például... például nem lehet így bekegőrizálni a nyelvbe.
- Kata És milyen más tényezők járultak hozzá, hogy nem sikerült annyira megtanulnod angolul, mint, ahogy szeretted volna?
- Brian **Amikor fixen volt a heti két angol, akkor valószínűleg több energiát kellett volna befektetni. Meg többet kellett volna vele foglalkozni.**
- Kata És miért nem fektettél bele több energiát, és miért nem foglalkoztál vele többet?
- Brian Mert az ember azt gondolta, hogy még van idő, és még úgyis lesz idő ezzel foglalkozni. Csak aztán az idő eltelt. **Igazából most az elmúlt egy évben került elő a dolog, úgy, hogy, itt az üzleti megbeszélések, meg egyéb miatt, hogy a szöveges**

tárgyalóképes angolt egy év alatt... azt mindenképp össze kell szedni. Most napi
 renden van, hogy újra ennek neki kell futni mindenképp.

Table D2

Example of coded and summarized themes (Melissa)

Factors contributing to successes and failures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ cannot learn languages in course ○ grammar and vocabulary teaching no good - Yes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ when among native speakers pick up languages easily ○ does not know why sth is correct → feels it - success → native speaking environment - failure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ not enough speaking during the lessons ○ did not like speaking with her course mates ○ let herself lose the language ○ should have studied more ○ in HSc the German course was too easy for her → did not have to study anything at all
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - interesting topics - lots of listening, e.g. songs - spoke with everyone a little every lesson - young - was Hungarian - too much grammar - too little speaking
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - grades, marks, tests - nothing else
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - she studied well → they were happy - nothing extra - mother → spoke German well - father → little German
Plans to improve English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - would be nice - too much family, in a good way
Ideal language learning setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - private teacher → no patience for young classmates - no grammar → just speaking