

doi.org/10.61425/wplp.2024.19.1.27

EXPLORING THE L2 MOTIVATIONAL DISPOSITION OF ENGLISH MAJORS IN RECENT LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS: AN INTERVIEW STUDY AT A HUNGARIAN UNIVERSITY

Mai Nelly Kaw 

Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest
nellykaw.mai.mm@gmail.com

Abstract: Covid-19 rapidly shifted learning and teaching to online platforms, transitioning traditional face-to-face learning to online environments (Sato et al., 2023) and significantly impacting students' learning worldwide (Huang & Wang, 2023). This dramatic change has influenced students' motivation to learn English as a foreign language (EFL), as online and in-person learning environments create distinct motivational dynamics (Akpen et al., 2024; Ozer & Badem, 2022). While the L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009) has been extensively studied in the Hungarian context, the motivational disposition of English majors studying EFL in these evolving learning environments, particularly in the post-pandemic era, remains underexplored. Therefore, this study explores English majors' L2 motivational disposition in recent learning environments within Hungarian tertiary education, emphasizing motivation's critical role in long-term language learning success (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Lamb, 2017). To gain rich, in-depth data on participants' opinions and personal experiences, qualitative data were collected via semi-structured interviews with eleven English BA students in Hungary. Thematic analysis revealed various motives, including ideal and ought-to L2 selves, the L2 learning experiences, the influence of significant others, the teacher's role, instrumentality, intrinsic motivation, and international posture. The findings also show greater motivation in traditional in-person classes over online classes. The implications of this study could yield valuable insights for EFL teachers into what motivates their students to learn EFL and their pivotal role in the students' language learning.

Keywords: EFL, L2 motivational disposition, post-COVID English majors, interview study, Hungarian tertiary education

1 Introduction

Motivation, as described by (Richards, 2015), encompasses learners' feelings, interests, desires, and willingness to invest effort in learning a second language (L2). It is an essential factor in overcoming the challenges associated with L2 learning (Dörnyei, 2005). By shaping thoughts and actions, motivation plays a decisive role in determining success or failure in the learning process. Achieving success requires a blend of enthusiasm, commitment, and persistence, as even the most gifted learners may struggle without sufficient motivation. In contrast, learners who lack motivation often face greater difficulties than their motivated

peers (Dörnyei, 2005). Those who are motivated dedicate more time and effort to their studies, significantly increasing their chances of success (Richards, 2015).

Globalization and English's role as a global lingua franca have reshaped motivation concepts in L2 learning, emphasizing self-perception and identity over integration into the target language community (Dörnyei, 2009; Ushioda, 2011). Recent L2 motivation research has increasingly focused on how language learners view themselves and how this has impacted their motivational disposition and their L2 proficiency (Zhao et al., 2022). This perspective implies that learners' visions of their future selves can strongly influence their current learning behaviours and efforts.

In recent years, educational landscapes have witnessed significant shifts, notably with teachers and students transitioning to online education during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, there remains a noticeable gap in research exploring students' motivational disposition, particularly regarding any changes over the past decade or so compared to prior empirical studies in the field. Previous research has explored various aspects of student motivation: Bosnyák & Gáncs (2012) interviewed four English teacher trainees in Hungary; Kormos et al. (2008) used a mixed-method approach with Hungarian English majors; and Stamenkovska et al. (2022) surveyed 34 international students learning Hungarian or English in Hungary. However, there is still a lack of research on the recent motivational disposition of English majors in Hungarian higher education. Exploring whether students' motivation has changed recently is important, as research shows that motivation is crucial for long-term success in language learning (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Lamb, 2017). To address this gap, the present study employed a qualitative approach to explore the motivation of post-Covid English majors to learn EFL within the Hungarian tertiary education context. In line with this aim, the study sought to explore what characterizes the motivational disposition of post-Covid English majors towards learning EFL in Hungarian tertiary education. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights into the motivation of EFL university students in Hungarian higher education. Pedagogically, they may highlight how the spread of online teaching has reshaped English majors' motivation, allowing teachers and curriculum designers to employ more effective teaching strategies. Potentially, the study contributes empirical data to the understanding of motivation in applied linguistics, particularly in the context of post-pandemic education. These results might benefit EFL educators and learners by offering insights that can enhance language learning practices and address gaps in language pedagogy and applied linguistics.

2 Review of the literature

In this literature review section, the theoretical background of Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) and motivational dimensions based

on the findings from interview data in this study—such as significant others, the teacher’s role in motivation, instrumental motivation, intrinsic motivation, international posture, and motivation to learn English in online and in-person classes—are presented.

2.1 The L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS)

Dörnyei’s L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS), established in 2005, is structured around three key components: the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self, and the L2 learning experience. The ideal L2 self reflects how learners envision themselves as proficient language users. The ought-to L2 self represents external pressures experienced during language learning. Lastly, the L2 learning experience encompasses motives associated with the immediate learning environment and encounters, such as the influence of teachers, curriculum, peer groups, and success experiences, shaping individuals’ perceptions of classroom activities. Csizér (2020) attributed the prominence of the L2MSS theory in L2 motivation research to its simplicity and adaptability to diverse contexts.

According to Papi et al. (2019), various studies on motivation have explored an L2MSS model across different global contexts. While the ideal L2 self and the L2 learning experience significantly motivate language learning (Kormos & Csizér, 2014; Taguchi et al., 2009; Teimouri, 2017), achievement (Dörnyei & Chan, 2013), and proficiency (Lamb, 2012), the ought-to L2 self appears less influential. The focus in L2MSS has traditionally been on two aspects: ideal and ought-to L2 selves, while the third dimension, the L2 learning experience, has not received as much attention in theoretical or research developments. Empirical studies consistently show that the quality of the learning experience strongly predicts motivation and behaviour (Csizér & Kálmán, 2019). Bosnyák & Gáncs (2012) highlighted the under-researched area of teacher trainees’ motivation compared to students’. They interviewed four English teacher trainees in Hungary to explore their attitudes and motivation. Stamenkovska et al. (2022) tested the L2MSS on international students learning Hungarian or English in Hungary, revealing notable gender differences in terms of their L2 ought-to selves and instrumental motivation. Male learners displayed a higher ought-to L2 self, reflecting stronger motivation to meet expectations and avoid negative outcomes. They were also more motivated by the instrumental benefits of language learning, indicating a pragmatic, utilitarian approach. These findings explain learners’ attitudes towards the foreign language community and can help boost motivation when shared with teachers of similar students.

The L2MSS model (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009) was chosen as the theoretical framework for this research due to its longstanding dominance and empirical validation in L2 motivation research (Csizér, 2020). Its simplicity and adaptability across contexts (Csizér, 2020) further justified its selection. The present study focuses on university students from diverse backgrounds, including both

Hungarian nationals and international students in Hungary, which makes this model particularly suitable. The research, conducted through semi-structured interviews with EFL university students, explores additional motivational dimensions derived from the interview data.

Dörnyei's L2MSS is relevant for studying English majors' motivation in Hungary. While previous research has focused on the ideal and ought-to-selves, the learning environment's impact on motivation and behaviour is crucial. Empirical evidence shows that the quality of the learning experience significantly influences motivation and engagement, highlighting the need for further exploration in the Hungarian tertiary education context.

2.2 Significant others

Williams & Burden (1997) argued that language learning motivation is shaped by internal factors (like intrinsic interest, perceived value, self-concept, and attitudes) and external factors such as interactions with significant others, the learning environment, and broader contextual influences. Research shows the crucial role of significant others—family, teachers, and peers—in shaping learners' motivation, either fostering or hindering engagement (Bernardo & Ismail, 2010). Particularly, parental support significantly motivates learners in English language acquisition (Butler, 2015; Pawlak, 2016a). Noels et al. (2019) also highlight the influential role of significant others in enhancing language learning motivation. This study explores how significant others contribute to motivating English learning in Hungarian tertiary education.

2.3 The teacher's role in motivation

Kálmán (2023) notes that traditional L2 motivation research focused on learners and learning contexts. However, in recent years, there has been a notable increase in exploration of pedagogical aspects (Lamb, 2017). The role of teachers in motivation has gained attention (Henry & Thorsen, 2018; Wong, 2014). Studies show that individual teachers vary in motivating learners despite similar contexts (Lamb, 2017). Teacher behaviour and personality are crucial in generating motivation (Kálmán, 2021; Lamb, 2017). Lamb (2017) characterized this quality as a persistent willingness and ability to empathize with learners. Lamb (2017, p. 45) emphasized that “the aspects of teacher behaviour which appear to have the most motivational impact on language learners are those that relate to the human side of teaching.” For instance, studies conducted in recent years have delved into the teacher's motivational impact (Cirocki et al., 2019; Wong, 2014). Research shows that teachers' emotional intelligence (Rahman et al., 2024), teachers' intrinsic motivation (Zou et al., 2024), and teachers' motivating style and the quality of teacher-student relationships (Najikhatul et al., 2022) significantly influence student learning motivation.

Previous research demonstrates teachers' crucial role in shaping learner motivation. Studies have emphasized that despite similar contexts, some teachers can motivate their students more effectively depending on their behaviour, personality, empathetic responsiveness, teacher motivation and the quality of teacher-student relationships. This study aims to further understand the role of teachers in the Hungarian tertiary context because teachers play a crucial part in the L2 learning experience and are key figures who are very close to the students.

2.4 Instrumental motivation

Gardner & Lambert (1959) introduced motivation in L2 learning, classified as integrative and instrumental (Richards, 2015). Integrative motivation involves a positive attitude towards the target language and culture, aiming for cultural integration (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Learners with integrative motivation pursue language learning for personal growth (Harmer, 2015) or to fulfil specific needs (Brown, 2014). In contrast, instrumental motivation stems from practical reasons such as career aspirations (Richards, 2015). Research indicates that students often prioritize career goals, emphasizing the importance of English proficiency in securing well-paying jobs (Aspuri et al., 2019; Hong & Ganapathy, 2017; Pawlak, 2016a). This study explores instrumental motivation among English majors in Hungary and their career preferences.

2.5 Intrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation, emphasized by Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008), drives the learning process through inherent interest and enjoyment, seeking rewards such as pleasure, challenge, or skill development (Ushioda, 2008). Empirical studies consistently demonstrate a positive correlation between intrinsic motivation and successful language learning outcomes (Chang, 2010; Mega et al., 2014). Ngo et al. (2015) and Nguyen & Habók (2021) observe that learners are highly motivated by personal enjoyment in learning English, indicating intrinsic motivation and displaying considerable effort. In contrast, Zhao (2012) found that learners were driven more by extrinsic factors than by intrinsic enjoyment of the language. Understanding the impact of intrinsic motivation on English majors' engagement and effort in learning offers valuable insights into their learning behaviours and outcomes within the Hungarian tertiary education context.

2.6 International posture

Numerous L2MSS studies have examined the impact of International Posture (IP) on L2MSS components (Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Kong et al., 2018; Papi et al., 2019; Yashima, 2009). Yashima (2009) found a strong correlation between the ideal L2 self and IP, indicating that those with a strong IP identify strongly

with their ideal selves. IP includes interest in global affairs, willingness to travel or work abroad, readiness to engage with people from different cultures, and openness to diverse cultures (Yashima, 2002). Csizér and Kormos (2009) noted that L2 learning experiences influence IP and the ideal L2 self. Similarly, Zhao et al. (2022) showed IP's positive impact on the ideal L2 self and L2 experience. Lamb (2012) found that urban learners have higher IP levels than rural ones. Studies (Alnajashi, 2024; Kormos & Csizér, 2014; Pawlak, 2016b; Yashima et al., 2004) have shown a connection between learners' motivation to learn English with IP, including aspirations to move, study, or work abroad and interact with international communities. Exploring IP's influence on L2MSS components is relevant to English majors in Hungarian tertiary education because it helps in understanding how IP, in connection with components like the ideal L2 self and L2 learning experiences, can shed light on English majors' motivations within the Hungarian tertiary education setting.

2.7 Motivation to learn English in online vs. in-person class

During the COVID-19 pandemic, education shifted swiftly from traditional face-to-face to online and distance learning methods (Sato et al., 2023), significantly impacting academic performance, social interaction, and emotional well-being as evidenced in research (Bashir et al., 2021). In online language learning contexts, it is vital to consider students' motivation, which is a combination of the effort, the desire to achieve language learning goals, and positive attitudes towards the learning process (Alizadeh, 2016). Research suggests varying motivations between online and in-person English classes. (Nishimwe et al., 2022) compared university students' motivation in Rwanda, finding higher motivation among in-person learners who favoured face-to-face classes for social interaction and resource accessibility. This preference aligns with a study by Teodorescu et al. (2022) in Romania, highlighting a general preference for in-person learning.

In contrast, Chowkase et al. (2022) conducted a study in a Western Indian city and found that online learning supports motivation. Asmah & Idayani (2022) reported high student engagement in Indonesia, highlighting how online learning sparks curiosity and interaction while boosting confidence and motivation during online learning. These findings align with those of Morera Quesada et al. (2023) in Costa Rica and Stephani et al. (2023), who also found online classrooms to be favourable. However, Nasution (2020), in a study conducted in Indonesia, highlighted that issues such as limited technology skills, poorly designed online courses, and restricted internet access, which were the causes of student demotivation during Covid-19. Previous research shows mixed results: some students prefer face-to-face settings for social interaction and resources, while others find online learning sparks curiosity and boosts confidence. Understanding how the shift to online learning during and after the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted student motivation is crucial for developing effective teaching strategies for English majors in Hungary.

2.8 Previous studies conducted on students' motivation to learn English in the Hungarian higher education context

The section presents previous studies on students' motivation to learn English within the Hungarian higher education context in chronological order.

Csizér and Kormos (2008) investigated the role of the ought-to L2 self and the ideal L2 self in motivating university students to learn English. They found that the ought-to L2 self, influenced by social expectations and the immediate learning environment, played a significant role in shaping motivated learning behaviour. The ideal L2 self was equally influential, and both constructs, along with positive language learning experiences, contributed to students' motivation. Notably, a well-developed L2 self-concept could reduce the impact of negative learning experiences, illustrating the importance of identity in language learning.

Kormos et al. (2008) examined the motivational profiles of English majors at Eötvös University in Budapest. Their findings revealed an ambivalent motivational pattern: while students had highly favourable attitudes toward English, strong instrumental motives, and an awareness of its global significance, their primary focus was on achieving high competence in oral communication and practical language use. This highlighted the coexistence of instrumental and communicative goals within students' motivations.

Csizér and Kormos (2009) built on earlier work by investigating the relative influence of the ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 self on Hungarian students learning English. They found that the ideal L2 self had a more significant impact on motivation than the ought-to L2 self. While the ideal L2 self was shaped by students' perceptions of English's global importance, the ought-to L2 self was predominantly influenced by parental expectations. Hungarian parents, regardless of their language proficiency, viewed English as crucial for their children's future success in a globalized economy. By the age of 16, students had internalized the importance of English for career opportunities, diminishing the role of external pressures like the ought-to L2 self. Additionally, media and technology exposure further reinforced positive attitudes toward English, while classroom experiences, such as teacher attitudes and engaging tasks, played a critical role in sustaining motivation.

Csizér and Lukács (2010) conducted a questionnaire study in Hungary to explore the motivational and attitudinal dispositions of students learning English and German simultaneously. The study found that the ideal L2 self was the strongest predictor of motivated learning behaviour for both languages. However, exclusively positive attitudes toward English were observed only when it was the students' first foreign language, not their second. This finding highlighted the role of prior language learning experiences in shaping students' attitudes and motivations.

Bosnyák and Gáncs (2012) conducted interviews to explore the attitudes and motivations of English language teacher trainees and their perceptions of

teacher training programs. Their findings indicated that not all trainees exhibited the strong intrinsic motivation often associated with the teaching profession. Some viewed teaching as a fallback career or a stepping-stone to other professions. Both intrinsic and extrinsic factors influenced their decision to pursue teaching, reflecting diverse career intentions. Additionally, the study highlighted negative attitudes toward teacher training programs, suggesting a need for improved alignment between program content and trainees' expectations and goals.

3 Research methods

The following section comprises the research design, a detailed description of the methods of data collection (participants and setting, the instrument and the procedures) and the data analysis methods. On the basis of the literature review and in line with the aim of this study, the following research question was formulated:

RQ: What characterizes English majors' motivational disposition towards learning English as a foreign language in online and traditional in-person learning contexts within Hungarian tertiary education?

3.1 Qualitative design

The study used a qualitative, exploratory approach to understand what motivates post-COVID English majors to learn English in Hungarian tertiary education. One-on-one qualitative interviews were deemed most appropriate, as Dörnyei (2007) noted that qualitative research explores individuals' subjective opinions, experiences, and feelings. Therefore, to gather participants' views, opinions, perceptions, and experiences, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eleven English majors to answer the research question.

3.2 Participants and setting

This study was conducted with BA-level English majors at a leading university in Budapest, Hungary. The participants were selected using purposive sampling (Dörnyei, 2007) because this approach is suitable for exploratory research, allowing for the gathering of rich, qualitative data from a variety of perspectives, thereby enhancing the scope and depth of the research findings. To address the research gap on recent students' motivation in Hungarian higher education, this study focused on non-English L1 university students pursuing English majors. These students attend language practice classes and take a proficiency exam by the third or fourth semester, in addition to studying English literature, linguistics, history, and civilization. The study included 11 English majors, comprising seven female and four male participants. The number of participants in this study can be assumed to provide enough data, as the ideal range for qualitative research

is typically six to ten participants (Dörnyei, 2007). To retain their anonymity, pseudonyms were used. The participants' background data are summarized in Table 1.

No.	Pseudonym	Gender	Nationality	Age	Self-reported English language proficiency level
1.	Hedi	female	Hungarian	19	C1
2.	Laura	female	Hungarian-Libyan	26	C2
3.	Gabriella	female	Hungarian	19	B2-C1
4.	Flóra	female	Hungarian	20	B2-C1
5.	Linh	female	Vietnamese	20	C1
6.	Saadat	female	Iranian	33	C1
7.	Mi-hee	female	Korean	20	B2-C1
8.	Lajos	male	Hungarian	20	C1
9.	David	male	Hungarian	18	C1-C2
10.	Kristof	male	Hungarian	21	B2-C1
11.	Paul	male	Hungarian	31	B2

Table 1. Overview of the Participants' Background Data

Seven participants were Hungarian, one was Hungarian-Libyan, and three were international students in Hungary. Among them, eight speak Hungarian (the Hungarian-Libyan does not speak Arabic), while others speak Vietnamese, Korean, and Persian. They were aged between 18 and 33. Four of the eleven English majors were enrolled in the Teacher Training Programme. Self-reported proficiency levels ranged from B2 to C2: one at B2, four between B2 and C1, four at C1, and one each between C1 and C2, and at C2.

3.3 The instrument

The study employed a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix) to explore what motivates post-COVID English majors in Hungarian tertiary education. The instrument was formulated based on the research question, theories, the existing literature, and expert judgment, this format allows for flexible questioning without predefined response categories, encouraging participants to elaborate freely. Following Dörnyei's (2007) guidelines, the interview guide included an introduction, a few questions about the participants' background (gathering information about participants' age, nationality, major, English language proficiency and so on), the questions related to motivation towards learning English and a final closing question. The interview guide began with a brief message to the participants, inviting them to take part in the interview and assuring them of their anonymity, voluntary participation and the confidentiality of their interview data in terms of ethical considerations (Dörnyei, 2007). The final version of the interview guide is attached in the Appendix.

3.4 Procedures of instrument validation and data analysis

The interview guide was designed, piloted, and refined through eleven interviews until data saturation was reached. Multiple steps in the validation process included rewording and reorganizing questions based on expert feedback. Two pilot interviews ensured clarity and validity, leading to adjustments in the interview guide. The final version, included in Appendix A, reflects these refinements.

For data collection, an initial email was sent to university EFL teachers requesting their assistance in recruiting interested students for an interview study. The email outlined the research purpose, and included details about voluntary participation, the use of pseudonyms for anonymity, data handling, the absence of right or wrong answers, a request for honest opinions and personal experiences, the estimated duration of the interview, asking for permission to record, and assuring the freedom to stop the interview if uncomfortable. Teachers then provided a list of interested students and their email addresses.

Secondly, I recruited participants through classroom visits facilitated by EFL teachers, during which I directly requested students' involvement and collected their email addresses for contact and interview scheduling. Additionally, I randomly approached students on campus, explained the research, and invited them to participate if they were eligible for my study. I also invited friends from my part-time workplace who are currently studying as English majors in Hungary, to participate. The interviews were conducted online or offline according to participants' preferences, with permission sought to record, allowing participants to stop recording at any time if they felt uncomfortable. The interviews lasted approximately 20-30 minutes.

The interviews were conducted in English during eleven sessions held in September and October 2023. Three sessions were face-to-face, and eight were held online using MS Teams, chosen based on participant preferences. Due to my lack of knowledge in Hungarian, Vietnamese, Korean, and Persian, English was used as the sole language for communication and interviews. The use of English as the working language can be viewed in two ways: on one hand, the participants' competence in English is sufficient for conducting interviews (see Table 1); on the other hand, it is considered a limitation because, despite being English majors, English is not their native language. The recordings and transcripts are securely stored and accessible only to the researcher.

After each interview, the recordings were carefully listened to and the participants' responses were analysed, considering Dörnyei's (2007) two key features: (a) the flow of the conversation, and (b) its richness in detail. The majority of adjustments were made following the two pilot interviews, primarily focusing on revising the wording, rearranging, removing, and expanding certain questions. The final interview guide was found to be effective in eliciting information about the participants' motivational disposition towards learning EFL, and no additional modifications were deemed necessary. Following interviews, collected data

underwent thematic content analysis to identify and report patterns or themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Data analysis followed Creswell's (2009) step-by-step guide, including organizing and preparing the data, reading through the data, coding the data, describing and generating themes, representing the findings, and interpreting the data. The interviews were transcribed in full for analysis; however, the two pilot interviews were not included in the final set of 11.

4 Results

This section presents the qualitative results from the interviews. The findings show that English majors in Hungarian tertiary education had both positive and negative learning experiences. Some are motivated by intrinsic factors, enjoying English and envisioning themselves as proficient language users (ideal L2 self). Others are driven by external expectations and practical reasons like job prospects or academic goals (ought-to L2 self and instrumental motivation). Parental encouragement, teacher personality, support, feedback, teacher-student relationships, and peer interaction were also key motivators. The findings also reveal their preference for learning English both online and offline and their international posture. Table 2 (next page) presents the emerging themes.

4.1 The L2 learning experience

The data show that English majors' motivation to learn English was closely tied to their L2 learning experience, including various factors such as connecting with diverse individuals, gaining confidence, receiving support from peers, encouragement and recognition from teachers, participation in language competitions, achieving success, and travel experiences. For example, Hedi's motivation stemmed from her past travel experiences, as she expressed:

When I travelled abroad, I saw all these people who could not communicate properly because they couldn't speak English Because of that, I've seen people miss out on opportunities or get into inconvenient situations, so that was definitely a motivator for me—to be able to make my place anywhere, basically. (Hedi)

Some participants encountered negative experiences in their English language learning journey, including challenges with teachers, classroom materials, lessons, and emotional struggles. For instance, Paul recalled a secondary school teacher who mocked him, while others mentioned ineffective or overly strict teachers and repetitive, boring lessons. Kristof felt unchallenged due to his advanced level. During the COVID-19 pandemic, internet and technical issues hindered active participation in online classes.

Learning experience	Ideal L2 Self	Ought-to L2 Self	Significant others	The teacher's role	Instrumental motive	Intrinsic motivation	International posture	Online vs. in-person classes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -connecting with individuals -recognition -competition -personal experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -better version of themselves -to be proficient English users in the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -to fulfil expectations of family members -grades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -parents' ability to speak English -guidance and encouragement from family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -teacher-student relationship -supportive -connecting personal level -showing care and concern -offering encouragement -giving positive feedback -providing valuable guidance and words of praise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -future career success -getting certificates -engaging in master's and PhD programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a love of language -passionate reading of English literature -engaging in games -watching YouTube and movies -a desire to understand songs and interviews of musicians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -moving abroad -studying abroad -working abroad -the desire to interact with international individuals -the recognition of English as a global language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>In-person classes</u> -face-to-face interactions with teachers and classmates -more engaging and motivating learning experience -human connection -immediate clarification of doubts <u>Online learning (-)</u> -feeling distracted -losing focus -lack of attention -technical problems -internet problems <u>Online learning (+)</u> -versatile -engaging -offering more variety

Table 2. Emerging themes of the study

4.2 The ideal L2 self

Learning English as a means of self-improvement and personal satisfaction was a motivating factor for students. Hedi expressed this as follows, “To better myself, to become more advanced, maybe learn the most advanced part of English, for example, English used in literature and business. I think there’s always more to learn, so I would definitely not want to stop”. Kristof also found motivation in reading English literature and aspiring to use English proficiently like renowned authors and poets. He said, “I’ve always wanted to emulate their use of sophisticated vocabulary and eloquent sentences to express myself like them.”

4.3 The ought to L2 self

Some participants viewed others’ expectations as indications of care, which boosted their L2 motivation. Family influence was pivotal, with members indirectly shaping participants’ sense of obligation to meet their expectations. Gabriella noted, “My family encourages me because neither of my parents studied English in school, yet they follow English media and global news. They often ask me about it, which is really nice.” Grades also motivated participants by highlighting areas needing improvement and guiding future efforts. Lajos remarked, “I aim for good grades to identify areas where I can improve.”

4.4 Significant others

Most participants highlighted the significant influence of family members, teachers, and peers on their motivation to learn English. Specifically, the influence of peers and family members, particularly parents, is discussed in this section, while the role of teachers is explored separately in the next section.

The interview data revealed that parental proficiency in English and their guidance and encouragement, especially during childhood, impact students’ motivation in learning English. Participants with family members proficient in English exhibit greater motivation due to increased exposure to the language within their family environment. As one participant put it:

My father was an English teacher, and he spoke to me in English ever since I was a baby. ... my grandparents, my mother, my partner, my teachers, and friends, everyone’s really supportive of it. It’s generally very much encouraged to learn English. (Hedi)

4.5 The teacher’s role in motivation

The teacher-student relationship profoundly influences participants in their English learning. Supportive and engaging teachers who connect personally, show care, offer encouragement, give guidance, and provide positive feedback

inspire greater motivation. Gabriella, described the influence of her high school teacher:

My high school teacher motivated me a lot... she was a really big influence on me. She was kind and helpful. I saw that she had a really big impact on everyone... That's why I chose this path because seeing how a teacher can have such a big impact on someone's life is a really nice thing. (Gabriella)

The teacher's behaviour notably impacts participants' motivation, positively or negatively. Despite challenges or feeling upset from being joked about, these experiences can enhance their enthusiasm for learning English and shape their ideal L2 self. For example, Paul recounted: "In secondary school, I had a very strict English teacher. [...] She always pointed at me and made jokes about me, but that's why I pumped myself up. I wanted to prove to her that I could do it better."

4.6 Instrumentality

Future career prospects and academic goals serve as significant motivators for English majors aiming to engage in multicultural environments and join the global workforce. Motivations include aspirations for careers such as interpreters, translators, English language teachers, roles in translation fields, the tourism sector, and the Western film industry. For example, Laura expressed her motivation: "...my motivation to learn English is that I want to teach English abroad."

Some participants are studying English for academic purposes, aiming to obtain proficiency certificates and pursue English-medium master's and Ph.D. programs. Saadat stated, "the main reason that I am learning English is to take part in university and continue my studies." Additionally, Linh mentioned, "English is a compulsory subject in Vietnam, so, I have to go for it." Mi-hee from South Korea supported this by stating: "Our universities are quite competitive; we have rankings for them. English is one of the mandatory subjects, so everyone has to learn it if they want to go to top universities."

4.7 Intrinsic motivation

The study found that English majors are intrinsically motivated to learn the language, driven by personal interests such as a passion for language, reading literature, playing games, watching YouTube and movies, and curiosity about songs and musician interviews. Lajos enjoys learning different accents in English, noting, "I enjoy learning accents and how they manipulate language." Laura shared her interest in phonetics and pronunciations, adding, "I enjoy the sound of it. I love the phonetics and the variety of pronunciations the most. The accents are fascinating." She also mentioned, "I enjoy reading; the more I

understand, the more I enjoy it.” Laura stated, “I am learning English because I genuinely enjoy the language itself. I find it fascinating to trace its evolution.” Linh credited her initial motivation to her father but highlighted her personal growth, saying, “...He built for me the base, and then I built the floor and the roof myself.”

English majors’ motivation stems from their genuine love for the language itself. Gabriella expressed her enthusiasm as follows: “English was always my favourite subject. Learning English opens up a whole new world around you. I especially enjoy watching movies and series in English.”

4.8 International posture

The findings revealed a link between English majors’ motivation to learn English and their international posture. Key motivating factors included the desire to move, study, or work abroad, interact with international individuals, and recognize English as a global language. International mobility emerged as a key motivator for participants in learning English. Participants aspired to live and work in English-speaking countries. For instance, Laura, a teacher trainee, wanted to teach abroad, while Saadat aimed to be part of an international community. Hedi and Flóra also desired to move abroad and fit into various global contexts. Lajos believes that English is a valuable tool for navigating a world where his native language might not be widely spoken. He expressed it as follows, “English is a global language, and I feel it’s a significant advantage, especially for future job opportunities or if I want to move to another country..”

4.9 Motivation in online vs. in-person classes

Most participants expressed stronger motivation to learn English in traditional face-to-face classes due to engaging interactions. Conversely, they found online learning distracting and challenging to focus on. They highlighted that physical classrooms offered better motivation through real-life interactions and closer observation of expressions. Flóra emphasized the importance of human interaction and the challenges of online learning, stating “...it was impossible to focus for a long time online. Staring at the screen all day was challenging, and I couldn’t hear anything due to Wi-Fi problems. I definitely prefer offline classes.” Hedi also mentioned distractions and a lack of attention during online lessons, finding in-person classes better. In contrast, Lajos prefers online classes over offline classes “...because online classes are so much more versatile, engaging, and offer more variety.”

5 Discussion

Comparing the earlier studies by (Csizér & Kormos, 2008, 2009; Csizér & Lukács, 2010; Kormos et al., 2008a), and Bosnyák and Gáncs (2012) with the current study reveals similarities and differences in Hungarian tertiary students’

motivation to learn English. Both periods show students' positive attitudes and intrinsic and instrumental motivations, such as career goals, though they lack a strong integrative orientation. The role of English in a globalized world remains significant, with external incentives like good grades and exam results being important. However, in the current study, students show stronger international posture and influence from significant others. The comparison of online versus in-person learning motivation is a new finding prompted by the pandemic.

The interviews results indicated the importance of *language learning experience* in the participants' journey of learning English. The majority of participants expressed positive evaluations of their overall English learning experience, consistent with findings from both international and Hungarian contexts (Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Liu, 2020). Csizér and Kormos (2009) highlighted that positive attitudes towards the learning environment, teachers, as well as engaging activities, tasks, and instructional materials, seem to influence both learners' self-concept and their level of enthusiasm for learning an L2.

As regards *the ideal L2 self*, the findings revealed that participants envisioned themselves as proficient English users in the future, both in terms of language proficiency and career prospects. They expressed aspirations to use English in their future careers and achieve a level of proficiency comparable to native speakers. Career aspirations included roles such as interpreters, translators, English language teachers, and positions in translation, tourism, and the Western film industry. These findings resonate with previous studies by Alshahrani (2016), Csizér & Kormos (2009), and Pawlak (2016a, 2016b), which similarly highlighted participants' high ideals for future English proficiency. It can be assumed that as English majors, they have greater exposure to English and English-speaking environments, as observed in Liu's (2020) study.

The findings indicated that participants' motivation to learn English was influenced by their desire to achieve good grades and their sense of duty or obligation towards their family, especially their parents, who had limited proficiency in English. Participants expressed a desire not to disappoint their family members, reflecting their sense of responsibility, referred to as their *ought-to L2 self*. These findings resonate with studies conducted by Kwon (2023) and Pawlak (2016b).

Regarding *significant others*, participants frequently credited English-speaking parents for initiating and consistently supporting their English learning journey. Parental encouragement emerged as a significant motivator, aligning with findings by Pawlak (2016b) and highlighting parental influence on children's English motivation, as noted by Butler (2015). Butler found socioeconomic factors shaped parental influence, impacting children's self-confidence and motivation differently. The study also underscored the role of family and peers in enhancing language learning motivation, consistent with Noels et al. (2019).

The findings showed the significance of *the teacher's role* in motivating

students. The way teachers interact with their students, particularly through actions such as offering encouragement, providing positive feedback, valuable guidance, and words of praise, was highlighted as important. Participants emphasized how teachers profoundly influence their English learning journey, emphasizing the importance of effective, supportive, and compassionate teaching. These findings align with previous studies (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008; Kálmán, 2015, 2023; Lamb, 2017; Noels et al., 2019), which underscored that learners are motivated by both explicit strategies and teachers' implicit motivating qualities. Kálmán (2023) observed that these qualities include support, kindness, empathy, enthusiasm, conscientiousness, charisma, joy, and the demeanour of the teacher, as well as behavioural and attitudinal attributes that evoke achievement and social emotions in language learners. Notably, aspects of teacher behaviour related to the human side of teaching appear to have the most significant motivational impact on language learners.

In terms of *instrumental motives*, participants were primarily motivated by instrumental goals related to improving job prospects and achieving academic success, such as obtaining proficiency certificates and pursuing master's and Ph.D. programmes. Participants cited career aspirations such as becoming interpreters, translators, English language teachers, working in translation fields, the tourism industry, and the Western film industry. This emphasis on professional issues is consistent with findings from previous studies by Aspuri et al. (2019), Dégi Kovasch (2021), Hong & Ganapathy (2017), Pawlak (2016b). Additionally, the focus on obtaining state-credited language certificates aligns with the findings reported by Bajzát (2022).

With regards to *intrinsic motivation*, participants were driven to learn English by various interests such as a love of language, passionate reading of English literature, playing games, watching YouTube and movies, and a curiosity to understand songs and interviews of musicians. These findings align with prior studies (Ngo et al., 2015; Nguyen & Habók, 2021). However, they diverge from Zhao's (2012) findings, where students primarily pursued English learning for external incentives rather than personal enjoyment or passion for the language.

When it comes to *international posture*, the interview findings revealed that English majors' motivation to learn English is connected to international posture such as international mobility (e.g., relocating, studying, or working abroad), the desire to interact with international communities, and the recognition of English as a global language. These findings are consistent with prior research conducted by Kong et al. (2018), Kormos and Csizér (2014), Pawlak (2016b), and Yashima et al. (2004). Alnajashi (2024) further supported the correlation between learners' motivation and their international posture.

With respect to *motivation in online vs. in-person classes*, the findings revealed that most participants felt more motivated in traditional, in-person settings due to better opportunities for interaction and connection, and fewer distractions compared to online learning. These findings are consistent with

previous research (Nishimwe et al., 2022; Teodorescu et al., 2022). However, they diverge from other studies (Chowkase et al., 2022; Morera Quesada et al., 2023b; Stephani et al., 2023), where the majority of students preferred online learning, citing advantages such as gaining knowledge, staying alert, feeling satisfied, and achieving higher exam performance.

6 Conclusion

This qualitative study aimed to explore what motivates recent English majors to learn English as a foreign language in Hungarian tertiary education using semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis of the interviews uncovered various motives, including the ideal and ought-to L2 self, L2 learning experiences, online versus in-person class motivation, significant others' influence, instrumental and intrinsic motivation, and international posture. Notably, teachers play a crucial role in motivating students, with a majority expressing a preference for in-person classes. The study's implications offer valuable insights for EFL teachers on understanding student motivation and the pivotal role teachers play in their English language learning journey.

This study has certain limitations. Due to my lack of proficiency in Hungarian, Vietnamese, Korean, and Persian, the interviews were conducted solely in English, the only language available for communication. Despite the participants being English majors, English is not their native language. Hence, there was a language barrier, potentially impeding the depth and subtlety of communication during the interviews. Participants might not have felt entirely comfortable expressing themselves in English, possibly resulting in misinterpretations or incomplete articulation of their thoughts and feelings. Although this study was conducted solely in the Hungarian tertiary education context, its findings offer valuable insights into the motivational dispositions of EFL university students, both locally and internationally in similar contexts due to the possible transferability of the results. These insights can inform pedagogy, particularly in online teaching environments, to create more engaging teaching strategies. Additionally, the study contributes empirical data to the understanding of motivation in applied linguistics, particularly contrasting online and in-person teaching contexts. These results can benefit EFL educators and learners by enhancing language learning practices and addressing gaps in language pedagogy and applied linguistics.

To motivate their students, teachers should prioritize face-to-face interactions by creating engaging, interactive classroom activities such as group discussions, presentations, and collaborative projects that foster a dynamic learning environment. Teachers should encourage students to envision themselves as proficient English speakers, highlighting the personal and professional benefits of mastering the language by setting clear, achievable goals and providing regular feedback to align students' current efforts with their

long-term aspirations. Additionally, they might consider designing enjoyable and career-relevant lessons using real-world materials to make learning more meaningful and motivating.

The interview findings could be supplemented with questionnaire data, transforming this study into a mixed methods approach to triangulate the data and provide a more robust analysis. Creswell (2008, p. 28) states that “mixed methods researchers look to many approaches for collecting and analysing data rather than subscribing to only one way (e.g., quantitative or qualitative).” Additionally, conducting interviews with non-English majors and comparing the results with those of English majors could offer significant insights. The current results reflect only the students’ perspectives; incorporating teachers’ views on their students’ motivation would enhance the study’s comprehensiveness.

Proofread for the use of English by: Francis J. Prescott-Pickup, Department of English Language Pedagogy, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisors, Professor Krisztina Károly and Professor Kálmán Csaba, for their invaluable guidance and unwavering support. I am also profoundly thankful to Professor Francis J. Prescott-Pickup for his meticulous proofreading and invaluable assistance in refining the use of English in this study. Furthermore, I extend my sincere appreciation to the reviewers for their constructive and insightful feedback, as well as to the interview participants for their kind cooperation and in-depth responses.

References

- Akpen, C., Asaolu, S., Atobatele, S., Okagbue, H., & Sampson, S. (2024). Impact of online learning on student's performance and engagement: A systematic review. *Discover Education*, 3, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44217-024-00253-0>
- Alizadeh, M. (2016). The impact of motivation on English language learning. *International Journal of Research in English Education*, 1(1), 11–15.
- Alnajashi, A. (2024). Exploring the interplay of motivation, international posture, and online informal English learning: A mixed-methods study. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 13(2), 106–118. <https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v13n2p106>
- Alshahrani, A. (2016). L2 motivational self system among Arab EFL learners: Saudi perspective. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 5(5), 145–152. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v5n.5p>.
- Asmah, F., & Idayani, A. (2022). Students' perception and motivation toward online learning at English language education in Pekanbaru. *ELT-Lectura: Studies and Perspectives in English Language Teaching*, 9(1), 75–88. <https://doi.org/10.31849/elt-lectura.v9i1.9047>
- Aspuri, N., Samad, I. A., Fitriani, S. S., & Abdul Samad, N. M. (2019). The role of instrumental motivation among EFL students in language learning process. *Journal of English Education*, 4(1), 48–53. <https://doi.org/10.31327/jee.v4i1.892>
- Bajzát, T. (2022). Instrumental orientation and motivational intensity among secondary school students in north-east Hungary. *Multidiszciplináris Tudományok*, 12(3), 139–150. <https://doi.org/10.35925/j.multi.2022.3.13>
- Bashir, A., Bashir, S., Rana, K., Lambert, P., & Vernallis, A. (2021). Post-COVID adaptations; the shifts towards online learning, hybrid course delivery and the implications for Biosciences courses in the higher education setting. *Frontiers in Education*, 6, 1–13.
- Bernardo, A. B. I., & Ismail, R. (2010). Social perceptions of achieving students and achievement goals of students in Malaysia and the Philippines. *Social Psychology of Education*, 13(3), 385–407. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-010-9118-y>
- Bosnyák, J., & Gáncs, N. (2012). The motivational disposition of English language teacher Trainees. *Working Papers in Language Pedagogy*, 6, 64–78. <https://doi.org/10.61425/wplp.2012.06.64.78>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77–101.
- Brown, H. D. (2014). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. Pearson.
- Butler, Y. G. (2015). Parental factors in children's motivation for learning English: A case in China. *Research Papers in Education*, 30(2), 164–191. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2014.891643>

- Chang, L. Y.-H. (2010). Group processes and EFL learners' motivation: A study of group dynamics in EFL classrooms. *TESOL Quarterly*, 44, 129–154.
- Chowkase, A. A., Datar, K., Deshpande, A., Khasnis, S., Keskar, A., & Godbole, S. (2022). Online learning, classroom quality, and student motivation: Perspectives from students, teachers, parents, and program staff. *Gifted Education International*, 38(1), 74–94. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02614294211060401>
- Cirocki, A., Soto, S. T., Rojas Encalada, M. A., & Honores Cuenca, K. V. (2019). Motivational strategies in the secondary school EFL classroom: The case of Ecuador. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 16(2), 250–265. <https://doi.org/10.56040/acst1625>
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design – Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Csizér, K. (2020). The L2 Motivational Self System. In M. Lamb, K. Csizér, A. Henry, & S. Ryan (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Motivation for Language Learning* (pp. 71–88). Springer Nature.
- Csizér, K., & Kálmán, Cs. (2019). Language learning experience: The neglected element in L2 motivation research. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 9(1), 13–17. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2019.9.1.1>
- Csizér, K., & Kormos, J. (2008). The relationship of intercultural contact and language learning motivation among Hungarian students of English and German. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 29(1), 30–48. <https://doi.org/10.2167/jmmd557.0>
- Csizér, K., & Kormos, J. (2009). Learning experiences, selves and motivated learning behaviour: A comparative analysis of structural models for Hungarian secondary and university learners of English. In *Motivation, Language Identity and the L2 Self* (pp. 98–119). Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781847691293-006>
- Csizér, K., & Lukács, G. (2010). The comparative analysis of motivation, attitudes and selves: The case of English and German in Hungary. *System*, 38(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2009.12.001>
- Dégi, Z., & Kovašch, O. (2021). English language learning motivation of students at the Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania in Miercurea Ciuc. *Journal of Education Culture and Society*, 12(2), 567–582. <https://doi.org/10.15503/jecs2021.2.567.582>
- Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in second language acquisition*. Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics. Quantitative, qualitative and mixed methodologies*. Oxford University Press.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2009). *The L2 motivational self-system*. In Z. Dörnyei & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self* (pp. 9–42). Multilingual Matters.

- Dörnyei, Z., & Chan, L. (2013). Motivation and vision: An analysis of future L2 self images, sensory styles, and imagery capacity across two target languages. *Language Learning*, 63(3), 437–462. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12005>
- Dörnyei, Z., & Ryan, S. (2015). *The psychology of the language learner revisited*. Routledge.
- Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. E. (1959). Motivational variables in second-language acquisition. *Canadian Journal of Psychology / Revue Canadienne de Psychologie*, 13(4), 266–272. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0083787>
- Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. E. (1972). *Attitudes and motivation in second language learning*. Newbury House Publishers.
- Guilloteaux, M. J., & Dörnyei, Z. (2008). Motivating language learners: A classroom-oriented investigation of the effects of motivational strategies on student motivation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 42(1), 55–77. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1545-7249.2008.tb00207.x>
- Harmer, J. (2015). *The practice of English language teaching*. Pearson Education.
- Henry, A., & Thorsen, C. (2018). Teacher-student relationships and L2 motivation. *The Modern Language Journal*, 102(1), 218–241. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12446>
- Hong, Y. C., & Ganapathy, M. (2017). To investigate ESL students' instrumental and integrative motivation towards English language learning in a Chinese school in Penang: Case study. *English Language Teaching*, 10(9), 17–35. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v10n9p17>
- Huang, Y., & Wang, S. (2023). How to motivate student engagement in emergency online learning? Evidence from the COVID-19 situation. *Higher Education*, 85(5), 1101–1123. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-022-00880-2>
- Kálmán, Cs. (2015). The teacher's role in generating and maintaining the motivation of adult learners of English in a corporate environment: A pilot study. *Working Papers in Language Pedagogy (WoPaLP)*, 9, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.61425/wplp.2015.09.1.21>
- Kálmán, Cs. (2021). The teacher's role in generating and maintaining the motivation of adult learners of English in a corporate environment: A pilot study. In G. Tanko & K. Csizér (Eds.), *Current explorations in English applied linguistics* (pp. 163–196). Eötvös Loránd University.
- Kálmán, Cs. (2023). Supermotivators in language education: An interview study with primary and secondary school FL learners on FL teachers' extraordinary implicit motivating agency. *The European Journal of Applied Linguistics and TEFL*, 12(1), 23–49.
- Kong, J. H., Han, J. E., Kim, S., Park, H., Kim, Y. S., & Park, H. (2018). L2 Motivational Self System, international posture and competitiveness of Korean CTL and LCTL college learners: A structural equation modeling approach. *System*, 72, 178–189. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2017.11.005>

- Kormos, J., & Csizér, K. (2014). The interaction of motivation, self-regulatory strategies, and autonomous learning behavior in different learner groups. *TESOL Quarterly*, 48(2), 275–299. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.129>
- Kormos, J., Csizér, K., Menyhárt, A., & Török, D. (2008). ‘Great Expectations’. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 7(1), 65–82. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474022207084884>
- Kwon, E. (2023). Ought-to L2 self and its influence on L2 motivation and demotivation: A case of college English majors. *English Teaching*, 78(4), 165–189. <https://doi.org/10.15858/engtea.78.4.202312.165>
- Lamb, M. (2012). A self system perspective on young adolescents’ motivation to learn English in urban and rural settings. *Language Learning*, 62(4), 997–1023. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2012.00719.x>
- Lamb, M. (2017). The motivational dimension of language teaching. *Language Teaching*, 50(3), 301–346. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444817000088>
- Liu, M. (2020). A study of Chinese university English majors’ L2 motivational self. *Theory and Practice of Second Language Acquisition*, 6(2), 67–85. <https://doi.org/10.31261/TAPSLA.8326>
- Mega, C., Ronconi, L., & De Beni, R. (2014). What makes a good student? How emotions, self-regulated learning, and motivation contribute to academic achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 106(1), 121–131. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0033546>
- Morera Quesada, G., Fallas Gabuardi, V., Hernández Vargas, R., Quirós, O. E., & Chaverri, G. (2023). Online or face-to-face learning? College students’ perceptions in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. *European Journal of Education and Pedagogy*, 4(3), 124–134. <https://doi.org/10.24018/ejedu.2023.4.3.645>
- Najikhatul, A., Murtono, & Slamet, U. (2022). The influence of the teacher’s role on students’ learning motivation in the implementation of blended learning. *Uniglobal of Journal Social Sciences and Humanities*, 1(SPECIAL ISSUE), 17–23.
- Nasution, S. M. (2020). Online learning and students’ motivation: A research study on the effect of online learning and students’ motivation in IAIN Padangsidimpuan. *Asian Social Science and Humanities Research Journal (ASHREJ)*, 2(2), 09–16. <https://doi.org/10.37698/ashrej.v2i2.31>
- Ngo, H., Spooner-Lane, R., & Mergler, A. (2015). A comparison of motivation to learn English between English major and non-English major students in a Vietnamese university. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 11(2), 188–202. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2015.1094076>
- Nguyen, S. Van, & Habók, A. (2021). Vietnamese non-English-major students’ motivation to learn English: From activity theory perspective. *Heliyon*, 7(4), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e06819>

- Nishimwe, G., Kamali, S., Gatesi, E., & Wong, R. (2022). Assessing the perceptions and preferences between online and in-person classroom learning among university students in Rwanda. *Journal of Service Science and Management*, 15(1), 23–34. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jssm.2022.151003>
- Noels, K. A., Adrian-Taylor, S., Saumure, K., & Katz, J. W. (2019). Motivation and the support of significant others across language learning contexts. *Journal for the Psychology of Language Learning*, 1, 106–141.
- Ozer, O., & Badem, N. (2022). Student motivation and academic achievement in online EFL classes at the tertiary level. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 15(1), 361–382.
- Papi, M., Bondarenko, A. V., Mansouri, S., Feng, L., & Jiang, C. (2019). Rethinking L2 motivation research: the 2 × 2 model of L2 self-guides. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 41(2), 337–361. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263118000153>
- Pawlak, M. (2016a). Another look at the L2 motivational self system of Polish students majoring in English: Insights from interview data. *Theory and Practice of Second Language Acquisition*, 2(2), 9–26.
- Pawlak, M. (2016b). Investigating Language Learning Motivation from an Ideal Language-Self Perspective: The Case of English Majors in Poland. *Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 53–69. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-31954-4_5
- Rahman, Md. H., Bin Amin, M., Yusof, M. F., Islam, Md. A., & Afrin, S. (2024). Influence of teachers' emotional intelligence on students' motivation for academic learning: An empirical study on university students of Bangladesh. *Cogent Education*, 11(1), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2327752>
- Richards, J. (2015). *Key issues in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sato, S. N., Condes Moreno, E., Rubio-Zarapuz, A., Dalamitros, A. A., Yañez-Sepulveda, R., Tornero-Aguilera, J. F., & Clemente-Suárez, V. J. (2023). Navigating the new normal: Adapting online and distance learning in the post-pandemic era. *Education Sciences*, 14(1), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14010019>
- Stamenkovska, T., Kálmán, C., & Győri, J. G. (2022). The motivational disposition of international students learning foreign languages in Hungary: Testing the L2 motivation self system in the Hungarian context. *Journal of Adult Learning, Knowledge and Innovation*, 5(2), 101–110. <https://doi.org/10.1556/2059.2022.00060>
- Stephani, N., Alvin, S., & Riatun. (2023). Exploring college students' motivations for choosing online learning program. *Cogent Education*, 10(2), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2266206>

- Taguchi, T., Magid, M., & Papi, M. (2009). 4. The L2 motivational self system among Japanese, Chinese and Iranian learners of English: A comparative study. In Z. Dörnyei & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, Language Identity and the L2 Self* (pp. 66–97). Bristol: Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781847691293-005>
- Teimouri, Y. (2017). L2 selves, emotions, and motivated behaviors. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 39, 691–709.
- Teodorescu, D., Aivaz, K. A., & Amalfi, A. (2022). Factors affecting motivation in online courses during the COVID-19 pandemic: The experiences of students at a Romanian public university. *European Journal of Higher Education*, 12(3), 332–349. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21568235.2021.1972024>
- Ushioda, E. (2008). Motivation and good language learners. In *Lessons from Good Language Learners* (pp. 19–34). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511497667.004>
- Ushioda, E. (2011). Language learning motivation, self and identity: Current theoretical perspectives. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 24(3), 199–210. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2010.538701>
- Williams, M., & Burden, R. L. (1997). *Psychology for language teachers*. Cambridge University Press.
- Wong, R. M. H. (2014). An investigation of strategies for student motivation in the Chinese EFL context. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 8(2), 132–154. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2013.777449>
- Yashima, T. (2002). Willingness to communicate in a second language: The Japanese EFL context. *The Modern Language Journal*, 86(1), 54–66. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-4781.00136>
- Yashima, T. (2009). International posture and the ideal L2 self in the Japanese EFL context. In Z. Dörnyei & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self* (pp. 144–159). Multilingual Matters.
- Yashima, T., Zenuk-Nishide, L., & Shimizu, K. (2004). The influence of attitudes and affect on willingness to communicate and second language communication. *Language Learning*, 54(1), 119–152. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2004.00250.x>
- Zhao, L. (2012). Investigation into motivation types and influences on motivation: The case of Chinese non-English majors. *English Language Teaching*, 5(3), 100–122. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n3p100>
- Zhao, X., Xiao, W., & Zhang, J. (2022). L2 motivational self system, international posture and the sustainable development of L2 proficiency in the COVID-19 era: A case of English majors in China. *Sustainability*, 14(13), 80–87. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14138087>
- Zou, H., Yao, J., Zhang, Y., & Huang, X. (2024). The influence of teachers' intrinsic motivation on students' intrinsic motivation: The mediating role of teachers' motivating style and teacher-student relationships. *Psychology in the Schools*, 61(1), 272–286. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.23050>

APPENDIX

The final version of the EFL university students' interview guide

Thank you for participating in this interview and helping me with this research. The aim of this research is to understand the factors that motivate university students in Hungary to learn English, and the relationship between motivation and willingness to communicate. This interview will be used for research purposes only, and the analysis will be based on a summary of the collected data. Your participation in this research is voluntary, and full anonymity is guaranteed; no personal details will be disclosed. I am interested in hearing about your personal experiences and opinions, and there are no right or wrong answers. Your unique insights and perspectives are extremely valuable for this study. The interview is expected to take approximately 20-30 minutes, and with your permission, I would like to record our conversation. If, at any point during the interview, you feel uncomfortable, please let me know, and we can temporarily or permanently stop the recording. We can begin whenever you are ready.

Part 1: **Introductory questions**

1. How old are you?
2. What is your nationality?
3. What is your mother tongue? (What is your native language?)
4.
 - a. Why did you choose to take English as a major?
 - b. Do you want to become an English teacher?
 - c. Why do you want to become an English teacher?
 - d. Do you have a preference for the age group you would like to teach? (Are you more interested in teaching young learners or university students?)
5. Which year are you in?
6. When did you start learning English?
7. Is English your first, second or third foreign language? (Is English your second or foreign language?)
8. How many years have you been learning English?
9. How would you rate your English proficiency? Do you have a language certificate? What kind?
10. Do you speak any other foreign languages?

Part 2: **Motivational Disposition of University Students**

1. Why are you learning English?
2. What do you enjoy in learning English?
3. What kind of good experiences have you had while learning English?
4. What kind of bad experiences have you had while learning English?
5. Can you describe specific personal experiences or events that have significantly motivated you to learn English?
6. Who inspires you, encourages you or supports you to learn English? (for example, your parents, teachers, friends, motivational speakers, social influencers, etc.)
7. How do your academic goals and future career plans influence your motivation to engage in English language learning?
8. What cultural or social factors, like being around English-speaking communities or interacting with peers, motivate you to learn English?

9. What challenges have you encountered in your English language journey?
10. How have you managed to stay motivated despite these challenges?
11. What specific learning resources, strategies, or activities that you find particularly motivating and effective for improving your English language skills?
12. In your experience, what differences have you noticed in your motivation when learning English between online language learning and traditional in-class language learning environments?
13. Can you share your insights on how online language learning resources and tools have affected your motivation to learn English?

I would like to know if there is anything else you would like to add for the entire interview.

Thank you very much for your time and kind help.