Factors influencing senior learners’ language learning motivation. A Hungarian perspective

EMESE SCHILLER¹* and HELGA DORNER²

¹ ELTE, Budapest, Hungary
² Central European University, Budapest, Hungary

ABSTRACT

The paper aims to investigate Hungarian senior language learners’ motivational profile with a special attention to factors influencing their motivational intensity. We focused on the significant features of Hungarian senior language learners’ motivational behaviour and conducted a survey with thirty senior Hungarian students learning English as a Foreign Language (FL). This instrument was constructed based on Gardner’s socio-educational model and Tremblay and Gardner’s model of second language (SL) motivation. We performed a series of statistical analyses on the data. The results of multiple regression analyses show that the most influential factors regarding motivational behaviour of older language learners in this context are attitude towards leaning the SL and goal specificity.

KEYWORDS

Foreign language motivation, motivational intensity, senior learners

INTRODUCTION

There has been considerable research on the role of different attitudes that may influence language learning acquisition (Csizér & Kormos, 2006; Gardner, 2004) and thus the importance of motivation regarding learning a foreign language (FL) has become an acknowledged fact (Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Gardner, 2004; Kaur, 2016; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). In Hungary, learning a FL has been a priority for all generations, but in particular for students in secondary education, as knowing a FL is a prerequisite for university admission. Therefore, the role as well as influencing factors of motivation have been extensively investigated through large surveys focussing on Hungarian teenage language learners and university students (Csizér & Kormos, 2006; Dörnyei, Csizér, & Németh, 2006; Kormos & Csizér, 2014). Concerning old-aged learning, numerous studies of adult education have been conducted on altered cognitive abilities of older people concerning their language learning processes (Bóna, 2013; Fülöp, 2013), however, there has been little research in the area of their language learning motivation (Kaczor, 2011). The aim of this article is thus to investigate the significant features of senior language learners’ motivational behaviour who learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL). For this purpose, we constructed a questionnaire based on Gardner’s (1985) socio-educational model and Tremblay and Gardner’s (1995) model of educational- and sociocultural perspectives of Second Language (SL) motivation. The main objective of this paper is thus to introduce the validation process of the questionnaire that was designed to address this research gap by focussing on and collecting data about senior EFL learners’ motivational behaviour in Hungary.
THE MAIN MOTIVATIONAL CONCEPTS FOR SECOND AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE (FL) LEARNERS

Motivation is one of the most significant aspects of second and FL learning; however, there seems to be no unanimous definition of it (Gardner, 2001; Kleinginna & Kleininginna, 1981; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). As motivation can be applied as an umbrella term when dealing with human cognitive processes, most of its interpretations entail the following features. First, motivation means having a reason to perform a given action. Secondly, it is the effort one is willing to invest into achieving a particular goal. Finally, motivation relates also to how long an individual can sustain doing a specific activity (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), apart from intellectual capacity and language aptitude, it is one’s attitude towards the community as well as their motivation for learning the target language that play an essential role when mastering a FL (cf. Gardner, 1985; Gardner, Gliksman, & Smythe, 1978). Therefore, we can presume that due to the effectual aspect of social psychological factors, language learning may differ from learning other school subjects, since a particular FL may also subsume the application of a new cultural behaviour (Gardner, 2004). Accordingly, Gardner and Lambert (1972) stated that language achievement is greatly affected by not only cognitive, but also affective factors including FL learning motivation (Clément, Gardner, & Smythe, 1977).

Gardner’s (1985) socio-educational model

A summary of the variables that have an impact on motivation regarding learning both a SL and a FL was provided by Gardner’s (1985) socio-educational model, the aim of which was to deepen one’s understanding of the processes of acquiring another language. Motivation, as described, is a broad-based phenomenon comprising several characteristics. However, Gardner (2010) indicates that there are three main components regarding motivation. First, motivated language learners devote effort to achieve their specific goal. Second, they are also motivated by the desire to learn that particular language. Third, their attitudes towards leaning the SL/FL also plays an important role.

Similarly, Gardner’s (2001) theory investigates the correlation between motivation and goal, the latter provides a reason for one’s motivational behaviour. The two aspirations called “integrative and instrumental orientation” (p. 10) have become the most prominent concepts regarding Gardner’s conceptualisation on motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). The former refers to the “desire and willingness to identify oneself with the other language community” (Gardner, 2001, p. 13) indicating a positive attitude toward the target group and active interest in that FL, as opposed to instrumental motivation, which concerns practical reasons of learning a particular language (Gardner, 1983).

The dimensions of motivation as outlined above were subsequently complemented by other subsystems. Integrative motivation includes “(1) an interest in FLs, cultures and people (…), a desire (2) to broaden one’s view and avoid provincialism (…), (3) for new stimuli and challenges (…), and (4) to integrate into a new community” (Dörnyei, 1994, p. 275). Instrumental motivation, on the other hand, encompasses knowledge related orientations (Clément et al., 1977); however, it may also concern language learning orientation depending on the quality and frequency of intercultural relations (Csizér & Kormos, 2006). The overall aim of Gardner’s (1985) socio-educational model is thus to enhance one’s understanding of the processes regarding learning another language.

Gardner (1983, 1985) claims that individual differences should be emphasized when acquiring a SL. In addition to individual differences, ability and motivation play an essential role that are also closely related to achievement. Environmental characteristics such as the cultural background and/or educational objectives of an individual can also have an impact on one’s motivational behaviour (Gardner, 2010). Further, the process of learning another language occurs in both formal and informal contexts indicating the educational and out-of-classroom learning opportunities (Gardner, 1983). Such learning contexts all have linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes, which are, in turn, affected by language learning motivation, attitude, or anxiety that stand in direct correlation with individual difference variables.

The socio-educational model is thus a “static representation of a dynamic ongoing process” (Gardner, 2010, p. 244) that entails constructs regarding individual differences such as attitude, integrativeness and instrumentality. These and the construct of ability are directly connected to language achievement, which is greatly affected by language anxiety. An interdependent relation among attitudes of learning, integrativeness, and instrumentality is also presented within the model highlighting possible positive correlations among the constructs. The model also represents a unidirectional relationship among attitudes, integrativeness, instrumentality, and motivation signalling that motivation is affected by them. The model also suggests that language anxiety has an impact on achievement, the effect of which can be altered depending on learning related experiences (Gardner, 2010).

Gardner’s (2001; 2004) Attitude/Motivation Test Battery

Based on the socio-educational model, the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) was created by Gardner (2001; 2004) and his associates. The AMTB questionnaire was developed with the aim to measure the components of the model. In the original version, one can perceive five main constructs including integrativeness, attitudes toward the learning situation, motivation, language anxiety, and instrumentality subsuming 11 scales altogether. In the model, the construct ‘motivation’ is affected by all of the other constructs,

Unauthenticated | Downloaded 04/11/21 07:38 AM UTC
each of them entailing various scales. For instance, (1) Integrativeness encompasses scales such as Integrative Orientation or Attitudes toward the Target Group; (2) Attitudes towards the Learning Situation entails Teacher- and Course Evaluation. To Motivation (3) belong Motivational Intensity indicating the effort to achieve a particular goal, Desire to Learn the Language, and Attitudes toward Learning the Language. Language Anxiety (4) includes Language Class as well as Language Use related to Anxiety. Instrumentality (5) is the last component of AMTB, which encompasses the scale called Instrumental Orientation.

The AMTB was originally applied in the bilingual context in Canada, however, later it was found that the questionnaire could be applicable to FL learners as well. The survey questions were translated into several languages and tested with students between the ages of 12–21 in various countries (Gardner, 2004).

**Gardner and Tremblay’s (1995) second language (SL) motivational model**

Gardner and Tremblay (1995) aimed to expand the socio-educational model of Gardner (1985) by adding a number of new measures to the original one. Their primary goal was to define the role of language learning motivation in an educational context, as research showed that there had been a great number of other influences grounded in the educational orientation which could have a great impact on language learning such as effort, attention, and persistence (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 1994; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

Their expanded model was based on the assumptions of motivational theories related to concepts of the psychological literature (embedded in the cognitive-situated period). Psychologists of this period perceived motivation mainly from the point of view of psychological activators that obtain a directive function on human action, and who think that individual difference variables play an essential role in language learning success (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). The Expectancy-Value Theory, for instance, was originally developed with the aim of apprehending the relation of achievement and motivation. According to this theory, expecting to be successful plays an important role in being motivated to perform a given activity. Hence, one of the most crucial expectations is self-efficacy, that is, one assuming to be able to represent a considerable achievement (Bandura, 1991). Similarly, in language learning, self-confidence acts as an essential variable in terms of motivation that eventually differs from the term self-efficacy for it entails the component of language speaking related anxiety as well. In the motivational model of Gardner and Tremblay (1995) both are represented indicating that low levels of performance-expectancy are closely related to high-levels of anxiety.

In addition to that, Kanfer and Ackerman (1989), who indicate the significance of cognitive ability and effort in relation to achievement, attentional effort acts as a core construct of motivation. Further, they state that “the construct of cognitive resources or attentional resources provides a theoretical linkage between ability and motivation and clarifies the influence of objective task characteristics on ability/motivation-performance relations” (p. 659). Maehr and Braskamp (1986) differentiate between the terms ‘effort’ and ‘persistence’ by indicating that the former refers to the willingness to work while the latter concerns the amount of time spent on a given task. For this reason, according to them, the most significant motivational variables, besides the measure of effort, are attention and persistence. Therefore, based on their theory, in the model of Gardner and Tremblay (1995), both attention and persistence are variables that reflect on motivational behaviour.

According to Locke and Latham’s (1989) goal setting theory, motivation is reflected in the effortful behaviour of achieving an objective that is predominantly indicated in the motivational orientation. The main function of an attained goal is thus to determine the motivational orientation (Oxford & Shearin, 1994), since having goals may have a stimulating effect on individual effort, persistence and direction (Locke & Latham, 1989). As Kormos and Csízer (2014) claim, “strong intentional and instrumental goal orientations seem to enhance learners’ views of themselves as successful future language users” (p. 293). For this reason, learners who fail to set goals, may not produce any changes in terms of effort that can have a negative impact on their later learning-related achievement (Bandura, 1991). In Gardner and Tremblay’s (1995) model Goal Specificity (i.e. concerning the particularity of a given objective) and Goal Frequency (i.e. referring to the regularity of setting goals) are identified and presented within the broader concept of Goal Salience. Based on their theoretical model, Gardner and Tremblay (1995) constructed a questionnaire relying on the SL motivational model, which was constructed in French. It has been mainly applied in a French-English bilingual educational context, however elements of it apply to SL or FL learning contexts as well.

**LANGUAGE LEARNING MOTIVATION OF OLDER LEARNERS IN HUNGARY**

Life expectancy has risen in recent decades in Hungary and in Europe generally. Hence, there is a continuing growth in the number and proportion of older persons in the population (DESA, 2017). It is claimed that by 2060 the number of Hungarians over the age of 65 will have reached 29%, which means that almost every third person in Hungary will be over 65 (Monostori, 2015). According to The Green Paper (2005), published by the Commission of the European Communities, elderly are grouped as follows: older workers are between the ages of 55 and 64, elderly people are between the ages of 65 and 79, whereas aged people are above the age of 80. This is the categorization we refer to in our paper.

In Hungary, one of the most essential documents on old-age education is the National Strategy for the Elderly (2009),
One of its main aims is to emphasise the importance of active participation of elderly in today’s society. The document also draws attention to the value of developing a positive social attitude towards the elderly, which includes policies in relation to active civic engagement.

There is also a growing number of older people wanting to learn a FL. In Hungary, there are several language learning opportunities including programs especially organized for them in community centres or in certain language schools. The role of instructors educating senior students is thus of great importance. As Kaczor (2011) pointed out, FL teachers instructing older learners perceived that their students’ language learning related motivation differs from that of younger generations. In order to gain insight into the language learning attitude of the elderly, it is also important to understand how older people used to learn FLs. Hungarian FL education in the Post-World-War II years (similarly to, for example, the German system in that particular period of time) was characterized by teacher orientation, authoritarianism, and the so-called grammar-translation method (Grein, 2020; Kaczor, 2011), which had a significant effect on this generations’ current language learning behaviour (Fülöp, 2013; Grein, 2020).

Further, research on gerontology found that learning related goals of the elderly also differ from that of the younger learners (Bajusz, 2015). Social relationships, eventual travel, and prestige-increase within the family or in the society are the main aims to acquire a FL in Hungary (Bajusz & Jászberényi, 2013). However, research in this area is meagre in the Hungarian context as well as in the international context. Therefore, a more in-depth analysis of senior learners’ language learning motivations is needed. This exploratory study is thus concerned with this very specific research area and investigates language learning related motivation of the elderly by taking the educational- and sociocultural perspectives into consideration.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

This study aims to measure senior learners’ FL learning-related motivation. To investigate this, a quantitative study was designed. The constructs of the survey were based on the socio-educational model of Gardner (1985) and the SL motivational model of Gardner and Tremblay (1995).

The following are the research questions:

a. What are the main characteristics of Hungarian senior language learners’ English learning motivation?
b. What motivational scales have direct and indirect impact on senior language learners’ motivational behaviour?

Participants and setting

The study was conducted at a language school in Budapest in June 2018. The participants in the study were 30 Hungarian older learners (26 females, 4 males), currently enrolled in English language courses at the institution. This small-scale study is conducted based on the notion that 30 is the minimum number of participants in order to validate the results of the questionnaire (Pérneger, Courvoisier, Hudsion, & Gayer, 2015). The participants were between 55 and 74 years of age (Mean = 64, 5 years). Their expected level of English was of beginner (61%) pre-intermediate (26%), and intermediate level (13%). Beyond learning English, participants mentioned having learnt other languages including Russian, German, French, and Italian.

Research instrument

Research in the field of educational gerontology has mainly focused on investigating older adults’ motivation to participate in traditional higher education (Bajusz, 2015). Results show that desire for becoming a member of a community and the intention to acquire new knowledge are the most influential motivational factors (Kim & Merriam, 2004; Lin, 2011; McNair, 2011; Terrain, 2007). Our purpose is to broaden research perspectives to old-age education by focussing on senior FL learners. In doing so, we present the validation process of a questionnaire designed specifically for older adults learning a FL in order to gain a better understanding of their language learning motivation. The original questionnaires were adapted and translated to Hungarian. In the validation process, we applied forward and backward translation techniques to ensure clarity of the concepts used (Tsang, Royse, & Terkawi, 2017). The questionnaire consists of adapted elements from the AMTB survey (2004) deriving from the socio-educational model of Gardner (1985). Goal Salience based on the SL Motivational Model of Gardner and Tremblay (1995) was added to it. In addition, items concerning Goal Specificity and Goal Frequency were developed in the context of this study.

The participants were asked to fill in a 93-item questionnaire that focused on their FL learning related motivation. In addition to collecting descriptive statistics, the following constructs were measured with the help of a standard 5-point Likert Scale questionnaire (5 = strongly agree, 1 = strongly disagree).

1. Integrative Orientation (4 items): students’ attitudes to the culture of the target language group. Example: Studying English is important because it will enable me to better understand and appreciate the English way of life (Gardner, 2004).
2. Attitudes towards English speaking people (7 items): students’ attitude to the target language group. Example: Native English speakers have much to be proud of because they have given the world much value (Gardner, 2004).
3. Interest in FLs (8 items): students’ attitudes to learning FL. Example: I wish I could speak many FLs perfectly (Gardner, 2004).
4. Teacher Evaluation (6 items): students’ attitudes to their teacher instructing them during English classes. Example:
I am looking forward to the English lessons, because I have a good teacher (Gardner, 2004).

5. English Course Evaluation (5 items): students’ attitudes to the FL course. Example: I like my English classes so much that I look forward to studying more English in the future (Gardner, 2004).

6. Motivational intensity (6 items): related to the invested effort of learning a FL. Example: I try hard to understand everything I hear or see in English (Gardner, 2004).

7. Desire to learn English (6 items): concerns the motivational devotion to learn English as a FL. Example: I have a strong desire to know all aspects of English (Gardner, 2004).

8. Attitude towards learning SL/FL (6 items): related to the positive attitude to learning a SL/FL. Example: I plan to learn as much English as possible (Gardner, 2004).

9. Attention (6 items): originating in the SL Motivational Model of Gardner and Tremblay (1995), in which the original statements were adapted into Hungarian, and 4 items were added and developed especially for this study. It concerns the attentional effort devoted to learn the SL/FL. Example: When I am studying English, I ignore distractions and pay attention to the task at hand (Gardner & Tremblay, 1995).

10. English Class Anxiety (6 items): concerning anxiety that can be aroused in interpersonal communication during the English class. Example: I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in our English class (Gardner, 2004).

11. Language Use Anxiety (10 items): consisting of Language Class- and Language Use Anxiety in the AMTB questionnaire. Questions of the latter were adapted from the research by Piniel (2017). It concerns measuring SL/FL use anxiety related to the different skills of SL/FL. Example: I usually feel insecure when I have to write in English (Piniel, 2017).

12. Performance expectancy, self-efficacy beliefs (9 items): investigating the interrelationship of motivation, anxiety and self-efficacy as well as students’ perception of their abilities to execute action in order to achieve desired performances. Example: I am confident that I am able to perform oral tasks well during the English class (Piniel & Csizér, 2013).

13. Instrumental Orientation (5 items): completed by 3 items that were developed especially for the present study based on Csizér and Kormos (2006). It refers to the practical reasons of learning a FL. Example: Studying English is important because it will make me more educated (Csizér & Kormos, 2006).

14. Goal Specificity (4 items): concerns the specificity of the attained goal of FL learning. Example: I have a clear idea of the level of English I want to reach (Gardner & Tremblay, 1995).

15. Goal Frequency (4 items): deals with the recurrence of setting goals related to FL learning. Example: I often make a list of the things I have to do in my English course (Gardner & Tremblay, 1995).

**Procedures**

The questionnaire was paper-based and personally delivered to 30 senior students during their English language classes of different courses in June 2018. The aim and focus of the study were explained to the participants in person as well as in writing. The questionnaires were completed on a voluntary basis and anonymously. There were no time restrictions to complete the questionnaire; however, the average time spent on the questions was approximately 35 min. The questionnaires were thereafter collected and placed in an envelope which was sealed in front of the class.

**Data analysis**

The collected data was computer coded using SPSS (Version 22). The level of significance was set for $P < 0.05$. In order to examine the reliability of the components, Cronbach’s alpha values were computed in order to measure internal consistency for each construct. After calculating these, the dimensionality of the scales was also investigated using principal component analysis. Finally, multiple regression analyses were carried out by using a step-wise approach to estimate the relationship among the motivational scales (Kormos & Csizér, 2008).

**Results**

**Descriptive statistics and reliability measures.** A principal component analysis was performed on the items of the scales in order to identify latent dimensions concerning motivational variables measured by the questionnaire. Following the component analysis, in order to estimate the reliability of the instrument, the items were computed by using Cronbach’s alpha internal consistency reliability coefficients. The internal consistency was set for $0.6 \leq \alpha$ (DeVellis, 2012) (Fig. 1).

As for reliability statistics, apart from instrumental orientation ($\alpha = 0.44$), all the scales were found acceptable (Murphy & Davidshofer, 1988). For this reason, this scale was excluded from further measurements.

Based on the descriptive statistics (Fig. 1), course evaluation ($M = 4.50$), motivational intensity ($M = 4.13$), and teacher evaluation ($M = 4.12$) showed the highest mean values among the measured scales. There was a significant difference in the scores of course evaluation ($M = 4.50$, $SE = 0.078$) and performance expectancy ($M = 2.94$, $SE = 0.113$); this difference is statistically significant ($t(29) = 13.37$, $P = 0.00$). In the case of motivational intensity ($M = 4.13$, $SE = 0.073$) and goal frequency ($M = 2.76$, $SE = 0.14$; $t(29) = 10.05$, $P = 0.00$) we also found statistically significant difference. Participants scored higher on integrative orientation ($M = 3.99$, $SE = 0.11$) than on language anxiety ($M = 3.19$, $SE = 0.13$) or classroom anxiety ($M = 2.95$, $SE = 0.15$); the differences here too were statistically significant ($t(29) = 3.87 P = 0.001$; $t(29) = 5.04$, $P = 0.00$). As standard deviation values showed (Fig. 1), scales of goal frequency and goal specification belonged to the largest
variation in the study, which indicates varying degrees of goal setting related to FL learning by senior learners of this sample. This information is necessary for language teachers when setting learning goals for/with their students.

Predictors of elderly students’ FL motivation

We aimed to find out what motivational and attitudinal scales may act as predictor variables related to elderly students’ FL motivational behaviour, therefore multiple regression analyses were conducted with a stepwise approach. According to the results of the regression analysis where the criterion variable was motivational intensity (Fig. 2), it was revealed that attitudes towards learning EFL as well as goal specification are the most significant predictor variables; the former having a stronger impact on motivational intensity. We also wanted to examine further possible predictor variables that may have an indirect effect on motivational intensity, hence we conducted another cycle of regression analysis setting the two main predictive variables of motivated learning behaviour as the criterion variables.

When establishing attitude towards learning a FL as the criterion variable (Fig. 3), it is perceived that the strongest predictor variable is the desire to learn English, which is followed by attention, goal frequency and, last but not least, integrative orientation. Interestingly, according to correlational statistical significance regarding integrative orientation, it can be seen that integrative orientation and the dependent variable are in opposing direction. It may imply that integrative orientation of senior learners does not have an overall positive impact on attitudes towards FL learning.

| Scales                              | N of items | Cronbach’s alpha | Mean | St. Dev. |
|-------------------------------------|------------|------------------|------|----------|
| Goal Frequency                      | 4          | 0.791            | 2.76 | 0.80     |
| Performance Expectancy              | 9          | 0.873            | 2.94 | 0.61     |
| English Class Anxiety               | 6          | 0.886            | 2.95 | 0.83     |
| Goal Specificity                    | 7          | 0.71             | 2.99 | 0.71     |
| Attitudes towards English Speaking people | 7       | 0.751            | 3.18 | 0.61     |
| Languaue Use Anxiety                | 10         | 0.882            | 3.19 | 0.72     |
| Desire to learn English             | 6          | 0.663            | 3.86 | 0.49     |
| Attention                           | 5          | 0.829            | 3.66 | 0.49     |
| Interest in Foreign Languages       | 8          | 0.609            | 3.86 | 0.46     |
| Integrative Orientation             | 4          | 0.628            | 3.99 | 0.61     |
| Teacher Evaluation                  | 6          | 0.752            | 4.12 | 0.47     |
| Motivational Intensity              | 6          | 0.704            | 4.13 | 0.40     |
| Attitude towards learning SL        | 6          | 0.767            | 4.26 | 0.47     |
| English Course Evaluation           | 5          | 0.632            | 4.50 | 0.43     |
| Instrumental Orientation            | 6          | 0.44             | –    | –        |

Fig. 1. Results of the internal consistency coefficient of the instruments as well as the descriptive statistics of the small case sample-size questionnaire

| Variable                           | B   | SE  | β    | Sig  |
|------------------------------------|-----|-----|------|------|
| Attitude towards learning SL       | 0.49| 0.11| 0.57 | 0.00*|
| Goal specification                 | 0.17| 0.07| 0.311| 0.03*|
| R Square                           | 0.60|     |      |      |

Fig. 2. Results of the regression analysis of the attitudinal and motivational scales with motivational intensity as the criterion variable

| Variable                           | B   | SE  | β    | Sig  |
|------------------------------------|-----|-----|------|------|
| Desire to learn English            | 0.56| 0.12| 0.59 | 0.00*|
| Attention                          | 0.29| 0.11| 0.30 | 0.02*|
| Goal frequency                     | 0.14| 0.06| 0.24 | 0.03*|
| Integrative Orientation            | −0.18| 0.08| −0.23| 0.04*|
| R Square                           | 0.76|     |      |      |

Fig. 3. Results of the regression analysis of the attitudinal and motivational scales with attitude towards learning a FL as the criterion variable
In other words, willingness to integrate into the community of the target language is not a motivational factor for people above the age of 55 to learn a FL.

Regarding setting goal specification as the criterion variable (Fig. 4), it can be seen that almost 40% of the variables is accounted for by attitudes towards learning the FL and performance expectancy. The former has a stronger impact on goal setting than students’ perception of their capabilities of executing performance of English.

By using path analysis (Fig. 5), we found that the scale called ‘Attitudes towards learning the language’ has both a direct and indirect impact on motivated learning behaviour. This means that apart from having a close link to motivational intensity, it also has a noticeable effect on motivational behaviour through goal specification.

FURTHER INVESTIGATION OF INSTRUMENTAL MOTIVATION

As discussed, instrumental motivation was excluded from the final version of the questionnaire due to a low level of consistency reliability coefficients, hence further analyses were performed with the aim to reconstruct the scale. In doing so, we had 10 senior students write a short essay (between 100 and 150 words) on instrumental motivation in connection with learning EFL. The task was explained in Hungarian in order to avoid any possible misunderstandings, and examples of possible instrumental motivations were collected so that students would not confuse this with motivational variables related to integrativeness.

The transcripts were analysed using grounded theory approach, that is, the analysis aimed for categories to emerge from the data (Charmaz, 2003; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). We followed an iterative process (Creswell & Miller, 2000) in which also qualitative comparison took place. Hence, the two coders compared, discussed and resolved their disagreements in order to improve the reliability of the coding.

As discovered, there are different conceptualizations about the practical reasons of EFL learning. One of the main factors of instrumental motivation of learning EFL is related to travelling abroad and planning the journey and during the holiday. The other factors include learning English for work purposes. Some of the senior language learners of this study are still active members of society, most of them occupy positions of different types in the medical or legal fields. In their essays, they referred to using English while communicating with foreign patients or clients.

Based on the qualitative data analysis, the dichotomy of Gardner’s (1985) conceptualization of instrumental as well as integrative orientation regarding older language learners is perceivable. A desire to travel being the chief instrumental orientation of learning English may indicate general openness towards foreign cultures instead of an integrative orientation.

DISCUSSION

In this study, we investigated the main characteristics of senior Hungarian EFL learners’ language learning motivation as well as the attitudinal scales having direct and indirect impact on their motivational behaviour. As found, attitudes towards learning a FL and goal specification are the most significant predictor variables regarding motivational intensity. This means that a positive attitude towards EFL learning and well-defined goals early on in the learning process may contribute to feeling more motivated to learn the FL. Desire to learn English followed by attention and goal frequency have an indirect effect on motivational behaviour. Interestingly, older adults’ integrative orientation does not have a positive effect on their attitudes towards FL learning, as opposed to previous research on young adult-language learners’ motivational behaviour (Cszér &
Kormos, 2006; Dordi-nezhad, 2015; Molaei, Asadzadeh, & Dortaj, 2014). Integrativeness, in their case, plays a particularly significant role in FL achievement. In other words, senior older learners, as opposed to young adult-language learners, do not necessarily feel strong about learning a FL because of either having or wanting to develop a positive attitude toward the culture of that target language group.

Further, we also found that performance expectancy or self-efficacy beliefs are strongly linked with language learners’ motivational intensity. This finding is in line with previous studies (Jain & Sidhu, 2013; Kaur, 2016; Piniel & Csizér, 2013; Smet, 2016), according to which self-efficacy is closely related to motivated language learning behaviour. However, we found that senior learners’ performance expectancy has only an indirect impact on motivational intensity predicting goal specification in the first instance.

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on this small-scale study, the following pedagogical aspects may be taken into consideration. Similarly to the context of younger language learners (Kaur, 2016; Smet, 2016), EFL teachers instructing older learners can expect their students to be generally motivated and to have positive attitudes towards the course and the instructor. However, they can assume a lower level of performance expectancy in general, which, in turn, may have an impact on language anxiety. This means that older language learners can often feel anxious when having to speak English in front of others. As presented in the motivational model of Gardner and Tremblay (1995) and in Gardner’s (2010) socio-educational model of language acquisition, language anxiety can potentially have a negative influence on learners’ willingness to communicate in a FL. Hence, SL and FL professionals teaching older students with higher level of language anxiety should consider devoting closer attention to incorporating affective teaching strategies that aim to reduce this anxiety during class such as different cooperative learning strategies (Nagahashi, 2007) or speaking activities (Hershner, 2015). Apart from that, we consider building a generally positive relationship with senior students who have language anxiety by treating them with great respect and appreciating their effort of learning and by focussing on their strengths instead of their weaknesses (Alrabai, 2014).

Furthermore, EFL or ESL teachers should keep in mind that older students obtain a great diversity in relation to instrumental orientation of SL/FL learning. There are also varying degrees of goal setting in their case. In order for goal frequency and goal specificity to have an indirect and a direct impact on motivated language learning behaviour respectively, language educators should pay special attention to effective in-class group or one-to-one discussions about language learning related goal setting. In fact, opportunities for counselling senior language learners in a one-on-one setting is a viable option (Feldmeier & Markov, 2017; Hardeland, 2013; Metzig & Schuster 2003; Schmelter, 2006).

Among the pedagogical recommendations on the different ways of facilitating effective goal setting, a needs analysis regarding students’ language learning related needs may factor in as a primary approach. This can be followed by either one-to-one or group discussions through which teachers can help students to set up their specific short as well as long-term goals with a special focus on formulating realistic expectations (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Kato, 2009). Finally, systematic feedback from the teacher and self-assessment activities may also contribute to students being able to monitor their learning processes (Schunk & Swartz, 1993).

CONCLUSION

Integrativeness and instrumentality have become the most well-known constructs associated with Gardner (1985). However, Gardner’s (2006) social-educational model does not only focus on instrumentality and integrativeness of language learning motivation, but also reveals a greater complexity entailing several motivational as well as attitudinal factors having a considerable effect on achievement. Further, Gardner’s model (2006) is not only a dynamic structural design encompassing the affective and motivational factors that have an influence on language achievement but it also has a cyclical nature, that is, learners’ experiences and achievement may constantly alter their attitude towards learning, which indicates a continuous and ongoing progress of SL/FL motivation (Baker, 1992 in Taie & Afshari, 2015, p. 610). Nevertheless, critics of Gardner’s social-educational model state that the original model has not been further developed, namely, its basic concept has never been adjusted to findings in psychology dealing with human mental processes. Additionally, as claimed, integrativeness is rather over-emphasized in Gardner’s model and pays no attention to students being successful in language learning without a positive attitude towards a SL/FL or more specifically, the target group (Taie & Afshari, 2015).

We acknowledge the limitations of this small-scale study that encompassed the lowest sample size for validating the results of our questionnaire (Perneger et al., 2015). However, the main limitation of this research is that our participants were from one institution solely. This implies that investigating the SL/FL motivation of participants coming from several parts of the country could result in fine-tuning results in the Hungarian context. Further, we focused on a Hungarian sample which implies that involving participants from other countries characterized by different or similar FL education traditions within and after the Post-World-War II-period may further refine our interpretations. In terms of survey methodology, reformulation of the items in the scale of instrumental orientation is also essential. For this reason, further research needs to take into consideration a larger population and also the modification of certain items in our instrument.

To conclude, as a successful FL speaker, one needs to invest considerable effort in language learning that may involve not only participating actively during the language
classes but also studying outside of the formal educational context. Therefore, senior students too have to learn how to organize their studies efficiently in an autonomous way to become successful language learners. Consequently, research on senior FL learners should also consider learner autonomy. Nevertheless, we think our findings and their research methodological and pedagogical implications have the potential to contribute to an evolving field of research that aims to focus on senior language learners’ motivational behaviour.

REFERENCES

Alrabai, F. (2014). Reducing language anxiety & promoting learner motivation: A practical guide for teachers of English as a foreign language. Morrisville: Lulu publishing company.

Bajusz, K. (2015). Időskortatás a 21. századdban [Elderly education in the 21st century]. A Pécsi Szenior Akadémia. In: B. Németh (Ed.), Pécsi Tanuló Város-Régió Fórum.Tanulmányok, elemezések (pp. 27–40). Pécs: PTE.

Bajusz, K., & Jászberényi, J. (2013). Az időskori tanulásról [Concerning old-age learning]. Kultúra és Közösség, 3, 59–66.

Bandura, A. (1991). Self-regulation of motivation through anticipatory and self-reactive mechanisms. In R. A. Dienstbier (Ed.), Current theory and research in motivation, Vol. 38. Nebraska Symposium on motivation, 1990: Perspectives on motivation (pp. 69–164). Lincoln, NE, USA: University of Nebraska Press.

Bóna, J. (2013). A spontán beszéd sajátosságai az időskorban [Peculiarities of spontaneous speech in case of the elderly]. Budapest: ELTE Eötvös Kiadó.

Charmaz, K. (2003). Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Strategies of qualitative inquiry (Vol. 2, pp. 249–292). New Delhi: Sage.

Clément, R., Gardner, R. C., & Smythe, P. C. (1977). Inter-ethnic contact: Attitudinal consequences. Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science/Revue canadienne des sciences du comportement, 9(3), 205–215.

Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. Theory Into Practice, 39(3), 124–131.

Crookes, G. and Schmidt, R. (1991) Motivation: Reopening the classroom. The Modern Language Journal, 75, 273–284.

Dörnyei, Z. (1994). Motivation and motivating in the foreign language classroom. The Modern Language Journal, 78, 273–284.

Dörnyei, Z. (2005). The psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in second language acquisition. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Dörnyei, Z., & Csízér, K. (1998). Ten commandments for motivating language learners: Results of an empirical study. Language Teaching Research, 2(3), 203–229.

Dörnyei, Z., Csízér, K., & Németh, N. (2006). Motivational dynamics, language attitudes and language globalisation: A Hungarian perspective. Cledevon, England: Multilingual Matters.

Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2011). Teaching and researching motivation. Harlow, England: Longman/Pearson.

Feldmeier, A., & Markov, S. (2017). Lernerautonomieförderung durch Sprachlerncoaching im Bereich DaZ [Fostering learner autonomy with the help of language coaching in the field of SL education]. In J. Böcker, L. Koch, M. Langner, & L. Constanze (Eds.), Sprachlernberatung, Sprachlerncoaching, Sprachmentoring: Qualitätssicherung und wissenschaftliche Fundierung (pp. 49–69). Giessen: Giessener Fremdsprachendidaktik.

Fülöp, E. M. (2013). Az időskorú nyelvhasználat és idegennyelv-tanulását befolyásoló tényezők [Factors influencing second language use – And learning of aged people]. Doctoral dissertation. Pécs: Pcsi Tudományegyetem.

Gardner, R. C. (1983). Learning another language: A true social psychological experiment. Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 2, 219–239.

Gardner, R. C. (1985). Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation. London: Edward Arnold.

Gardner, R. C. (2001). Integrative motivation: Past, present and future. Temple University Japan: Distinguished Lecturer Series.

Gardner, R. C. (2004). Attitude/motivation test battery: International AMTB research project. Canada: The University of Western Ontario.

Gardner, R. C. (2006). Integrative motivation: Past, present and future. Temple University Japan: Distinguished Lecturer Series.

Gardner, R. C. (2010). Motivation and second language acquisition: The socio-educational model. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Gardner, R. C., Gilksman, L., & Smythe, P. C. (1978). Attitudes and behaviour in second language acquisition: A social psychological interpretation. Canadian Psychological Review/Psychologie Canadienne, 19(3), 173–186.

Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. E. (1972). Attitudes and motivation in second-language learning. Rowley, MA: Newbury House Publishers.

Gardner, R. C., & Tremblay, F. (1995). Expanding the motivation construct in language learning. The Modern Language Journal, 79(4), 505–518.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research. Chicago: Aldin.

Grein, M. (2020). Methoden des Fremdsprachenerlernens im Alter [Methods of learning FL at an old age]. In H. Wolfgang, G. Frank, H. M. Königs, & Martinez, H. (Eds.), Handbuch Methoden im Fremdsprachenunterricht. Szeelee: Klett Kallmeyer.

Hardelean, H. (2013). Lerncoaching und Lernberatung. Lernende in ihrem Lernprozess wirksam begleiten und unterstützen. Ein Buch zur (Weiter-)Entwicklung der theoretischen und
Kanfer, R., & Ackerman, P. L. (1989). Motivation and cognitive Locke, E. A. & Latham. G. P. (1989). Goal setting theory and job
Lin, Y. (2011, January). Older adults
Kaczor, A. (2011). Az i a j i n , Y . , & S i d h u , G . K . ( 2 0 1 3 ) . R e l a t i o n s h i p between anxiety, attitude
Hershner, K. (2015). Strategies to reduce foreign language anxiety in adult EFL students of the European Union, Masters Projects and Capstones. San Francisco: University of San Francisco.
Jain, Y., & Sidhu, G. K. (2013). Relationship between anxiety, attitude and motivation of tertiary students in learning English as a second language. Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 90, 114–123.
Kaczor, A. (2011). Az ôven éve feletti nyelvtanulási motivációi és lehetségei Magyarországon [The second language learning motivation and language learning opportunities of people over the age of 50 in Hungary]. Gerontedukáció, 2011(11), 44–66.
Kaner, R., & Ackerman, P. L. (1989). Motivation and cognitive abilities: An integrative/aptitude-treatment interaction approach to skill acquisition. Journal of Applied Psychology, 74(4), 657–690. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.74.4.657.
Kato, F. (2009). Student preferences: Goal-setting and self-assessment activities in a tertiary education environment. Language Teaching Research, 13(2), 177–199.
Kaur, J. (2016). Causal relationships between integrative motivation, self-efficacy, strategy use and English language achievement. 3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature, 22(3), 111–125. https://doi.org/10.17576/3L-2016-2203-08.
Kim, A., & Merriam, S. B. (2004). Motivations for learning among older adults in a learning in retirement institute. Educational Gerontology, 30(6), 441–455.
Kleinginna, P. R. & Kleinginna, A. M. (1981). A categorized list of motivational definitions with a suggestion for a consensual definition. Motivation and Emotion, 5, 263–291.
Kormos, J., & Csizér, K. (2008). Age-related differences in the motivation of learning English as a foreign language: Attitudes, selves, and motivated learning behavior. Language and Learning, 58(2), 327–355.
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.
Lin, Y. (2011, January). Older adults’ motivation to learn in higher education. Paper presented at Adult Education Research Conference, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Retrieved from http://www.adulterc.org/Proceedings/2011/papers/lin.pdf.
Locke, E. A. & Latham, G. P. (1989). Goal setting theory and job performance. In A. Per-vin (Ed.), Goal concepts in personality and social psychology (pp. 291–326). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
Maehr, M. L. & Braskamp, L. A. (1986). The motivation factor. A social psychology (pp. 291–326). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
McNair, S. (2011). Older people, learning and education: What do we know? Leicester: Niace.
Metzig, W. & Schuster, M. (2003). Lernen zu lernen. Lernstrategien wirksamvoll einsetzen. Heidelberg: Springer.
Molaei, Z., Asadzadeh, H., & Dortaj, F. (2014). Instructional model for motivating Persian language learners. Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 112, 342–347.
Monostori, J. (2015). Ageing and retirement. In J. Monostori, P. Óri, & Zs. Spéder (Eds.), Demographic portrait of Hungary 2015: Report on the conditions of the Hungarian Population. (pp. 115–133). Budapest: Hungarian Demographic Research Institute.
Murphy, K. & Davidson, C. (1988). Psychological testing: Principles and applications. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
Nagahashi, T. L. (2007). Techniques for reducing foreign language anxiety: Results of a successful intervention study. Akita city: Akita University Press. Retrieved from http://air.lib.akita-u.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/10295/5473/1/kk9-6.pdf.
Oxford, R., & Shearin, J. (1994). Language learning motivation: Expanding the theoretical framework. The Modern Language Journal, 78(1), 12–28. https://doi.org/10.2307/329249.
Perrneger, T., Courvoisier D., Hudelson P., & Gayer A. (2015). A Sample size for pre-tests of questionnaires. Quality of Life Research: An International Journal of Quality of Life Aspects of Treatment, Care and Rehabilitation, 24(1), 147–151. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11136-014-0752-2.
Piniel, K. (2017). Measuring Foreign Language anxiety related to the four language skills: A study using Rasch analysis. Unpublished manuscript.
Piniel, K., & Csizér, K. (2013). L2 motivation, anxiety and self-efficacy: The interrelationship of individual variables in the secondary school context. Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching, 3(4), 523–550.
Schmelter, L. (2006). Prekäre Verhältnisse: Bildung, Erziehung oder Emanzipation? – Was will, was soll, was kann die Beratung von Fremdsprachenlernern leisten? [Precarious conditions: Education or emancipation? What wants, what intends, what should one achieve with one-to-one language counselling?]. Zeitschrift für Interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht, 11, 3–18. Retrieved from https://tujournals.ulb.tu-darmstadt.de/index.php/zif/article/view/377/365.
Schunk, D. H., & Swartz, C.W. (1993). Goals and progress feedback: Effects on self-efficacy and writing achievement. Contemporary Educational Psychology, 18, 337–354.
Smet, D. (2016). Motivation and second language acquisition: A study on the relation between motivation and oral proficiency. Unpublished manuscript.
Taie, M., & Afshari, A. (2015). A critical review on the socio-educational model of SLA. Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 5(3), 605–612.
Tarrant, F. N. (2007). Older adults & higher education. American Council on Education. Clarification Summary. Program Issues Clarification, 3(4), 1–17.
Tsang, S., Royse, C. F., & Terkawi, A. S. (2017). Guidelines for one achieve with one-to-one language counselling?]. Zeitschrift für Interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht, 11, 3–18. Retrieved from https://tujournals.ulb.tu-darmstadt.de/index.php/zif/article/view/377/365.

Open Access statement. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited, a link to the CC License is provided, and changes – if any - are indicated. (SID_1)