



Bachelor Thesis

Learning how to swim:
Exploring current attitudes towards foreign language
learning and speaking in Hungary

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Abstract

This study was undertaken to explore current attitudes towards foreign language learning and speaking in Hungary. Sparked by the low foreign language proficiency in Hungary (European Commission, 2012a, p. 14), it aimed at a deeper, and more qualitative understanding of the individual differences in attitude towards foreign language, and it investigates how these attitudes may be specific to Hungary. Data were obtained through semi-structured interviews that were conducted in and around Budapest with individuals of two different age groups (10 in total). The analysis of these data reveals a wealth of individual differences, which confirms the complexity of foreign language learning research. At the same time, the Hungarians that were interviewed showed some general patterns concerning the importance of the teacher, mixed feelings towards Russian, positive though pragmatic attitudes towards the learning of English, and an overwhelming enthusiasm for Italian - but only if they were asked to pick a language they would want to know without having to study for it.

Keywords: attitude, foreign language (FL) learning, foreign language (FL) proficiency

Exploring Current Attitudes Towards Foreign Language Learning and Speaking in Hungary

You are worth as many people as the number of languages that you speak’, and ‘the nation lives through its language’ are proverbs frequently uttered in Hungary. The first proverb refers to both the ability to communicate in several languages as well as to the ability to share in the spheres of different cultures. The second proverb is originally a quote from ‘the Greatest Hungarian’ Count István Széchenyi de Sárvár-Felsővidék (1791-1860). The count found that Latin, the official language in the geographical area of Hungary at that time, “expressed the spirit of caste and the egoism of the noble estate” (Wandycz, 2001, p. 140). Taking away the possibly ambiguous reading of the proverb (that the nation lives through *any* language), his message was clear. To decrease the division between peasants and noblemen and enliven a national spirit, he made great efforts to make everyone focus on their mother tongue: Hungarian (p.140).

The apparent contradiction emerging between these two proverbs also seems to be present on a different scale. Hungarians have been influenced by a large diversity of cultures and languages (Dörnyei, Csizér & Németh, 2006, p.29) since their arrival to the Carpathian basin in the ninth century (Kenesei, Vago & Fenyvesi, 2002, p. xxxii). Today, Hungary’s status as a member of the European Union facilitates trans-European contact, and their language policy actively promotes foreign language use (Fischer, 2009, pp. 76-76). It is curious therefore, that the foreign language proficiency in Hungary is remarkably low.

The *Eurobarometer 386*, a large-scale survey conducted in the EU, reported that 54% of the European Union’s population speaks at least one foreign language on conversational level (European Commission, 2012a, pp. 14-15). In Hungary, this proportion is 35%, thereby is the country at the bottom of the list, followed by Italy (38%) and Portugal (39%) (p.15).

From a broad perspective, the question as to why this is the case in Hungary can be approached from historical, political, sociological, economical, and many other points of view. From a narrower perspective, it takes an individual to choose whether he or she wants to learn a foreign language. Nonetheless, this choice is not purely an individual matter as it may be influenced by the various social attitudes towards the foreign language prevailing in the learners' community (Dörnyei et al., 2006). Gardner states: "attitudes and motivations are important because they determine the extent to which the individuals will actively involve themselves in learning a language" (1985, p. 56). Moreover, attitudes are "both central to the understanding of human behaviour and are capable of explication and measurement" (Baker, 1992, p. 20). The field of foreign language learning concerned with attitude and motivation may therefore provide useful insights into Hungary's foreign language situation.

This thesis will explore the current attitudes towards foreign language learning and speaking among a sample of Hungarian individuals. In response to a largely quantitative bulk of scholarly work, it aims at a qualitative understanding of the individual differences in attitude towards foreign language (FL), and it investigates how these attitudes may be specific to Hungary.

1. Literature Review

Background information about Hungary is of great importance to understand the context in which this research was conducted. The next subsection sketches an image of Hungary, and provides a more detailed account of the findings in the *Eurobarometer 386*. The following two sections delve into the reviewing of research on attitudes and FL learning, and specific research on attitudes and FL learning in Hungary. The last subsection states the research questions.

1.1. Hungary and Language

Hungary is an east central European country situated in the Carpathian basin: a relatively levelled piece of land located in the Danube Valley, surrounded by the Carpathian Mountains. It has about 10 million inhabitants, of which almost 2 million live in the capital city Budapest (Central Statistical Office, 2015), and with a maximal internal distance of about 500 kilometres it is a relatively small country. However small, its inhabitants that originated from the *Magyar* tribes and that carried with them the eponymous Hungarian language, have continued to live in the same geographical area for over ten centuries (Kenesei et al., 2002). As it turns out this has not been an easy task – Hungary has a much-moved (and loved) history of many a heroic uprising followed by defeat (Medgyes & Miklósy, 2000, p. 149).

After a 150-year occupation by the Turks of the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the Germanizing Habsburgs took over the domination over Hungary for another 400 years (Dörnyei et al, 2006, p. 16). A short-lived period of relative independence in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, although accompanied by a large loss of territory (the reason of today's Hungarian minority groups in several bordering countries), was followed by half a century behind the Soviet Union's 'Iron Curtain'. The collapse of the Hungarian Communist regime in 1989, which came "completely out of the blue as far as Hungarians were concerned" (Dörnyei et al., 2006, p. 16) resulted in a freedom that had not been experienced since the peak of the country's thriving in the fifteenth century. From the influences of the Ottoman Empire, and the impact of the Habsburg Empire, to being a satellite state of the Soviet Union: all have left their traces (Medgyes & Miklósy, 2000, p. 149). This means however, that the contemporary Hungarians are a product of their tumultuous and intriguing past as much as of their current circumstances and their future expectations.

Being a polyglot country with Latin as its official language until 1844, "it is only since 1920 (The Treaty of Trianon) that Hungarian has been the *majority* as well as the *official*

language of Hungary” (Medgyes & Miklósy, 2000, p. 198). It is therefore the more surprising that present-day Hungary is a rare example of a nearly monolingual country with 99% of its population acknowledging Hungarian as their mother tongue and only 35% being able to speak one or more foreign languages (European Commission, 2012a, pp. 11, 15). Next to its near-monolingual population, the Hungarian language itself is “remarkably uniform” (Kenesei et al., 2002, p. xxxii) as its dialectal variants are largely mutually intelligible.

1.1.1. Foreign language education in Hungary. FL acquisition can be defined as learning language in “contexts in which the language being taught is not the majority language of the surrounding community” (Wesely, 2012, p. S99). L2 acquisition is in turn understood as learning a language in a context where that language is significantly present in the surrounding community. Although these two terms are used interchangeably in the literature.

Unlike most of Europe’s Indo-European languages, Hungarian is a Finno-Ugric language that finds only very distant relatives in Finnish and Estonian in Europe, and in Khanty (Ostyak) and Mansi (Vogul) deep in central Russia (Medgyes & Miklósy, 2000, p. 150). Adding this fact to the aforementioned monolingual status of the country, it is not hard to imagine that foreign language learning is the only way for Hungarians to communicate with their neighbours (Medgyes & Nikolov, 2014, p. 504).

According to Medgyes and Nikolov (2014), Hungary “did not have a clear and comprehensive FL policy” (p. 506) until its entry to the EU in 2004. Russian, which was formerly taught as the first FL at both the primary and secondary levels of education, lost its status as a compulsory item in the national curriculum with the collapse of the Communist regime in 1989 (Medgyes & Miklósy, 2000, p.190). Other foreign languages such as English and German had already been reintroduced into the curriculum from the 1970s onwards. However, a lack of proficient teachers for these other languages resulted in a slow increase in

FL proficiency among the Hungarians. After the mid-1990s, language education in Hungary changed quickly. In 1993, only half of the final-year primary school students were taught Russian. By the late 1990s, the language had disappeared nearly entirely from primary and secondary education (Dörnyei, Csizér & Németh, 2006, pp. 17-8).

In present-day Hungary, obligatory foreign language learning is started in grade 4, or in one-third of the cases even earlier. While primary school teaches one foreign language of choice, two are taught in secondary education (Fischer, 2009, p. 76). Moreover, the importance of foreign language is especially stipulated in the context of tertiary education. Universities may add bonus points to the score obtained at an entrance examination, if a student in possession of certified FL competence (Medgyes & Miklósy, 2000, p. 212).

1.1.2. Language in Hungary according to the Eurobarometer. Medgyes and Nikolov (2014, p.504) argue that Hungary is no longer the “country of foreign-language illiterates”, and they are right considering the enormous growth Hungary has gone through since 1980, when only 9% of the population claimed to speak at least one foreign language (p.505). However, the present younger Hungarian generation that has been exposed to better learning opportunities, still seems to fall behind on foreign language proficiency (European commission, 2012a; 2015; see Appendix A). Drawing from the Eurobarometer online database (European Commission, 2015), Table 1 compares the FL proficiency numbers between the EU average and Hungary across the four different age groups. It shows among other things that on average in the European Union, 74% of the people aged between 15-24,

Table 1. Foreign language proficiency in Hungary and the EU

Age	One FL HU % (EU %)	Two FL HU % (EU %)	Three FL HU % (EU %)	None HU % (EU %)
Average	35% (54%)	13% (25%)	4% (10%)	65% (46%)
15-24	58,3 % (74%)	20,4 % (37%)	3,9% (12%)	41,7% (26%)
25-39	40,8 % (64%)	14,7% (31%)	2,6% (12%)	59,2% (36%)
40-54	33,1% (55%)	14, 0% (25%)	3,7% (10%)	66,95 (45%)
55+	23,6% (38%)	8,0% (17%)	4,0% (7%)	76,4% (62%)

and 64% of the people aged between 25-39 speak at least one foreign language. In Hungary this score is 58% and 41% respectively. The FL's most commonly spoken in Hungary are English, German and French (European Commission, 2012a, p. 21).

Besides FL proficiency, the Eurobarometer also surveyed FL learning behaviour, attitudes and FL motivation. Regarding FL learning behavior Hungarians scored consistently "unfavorable" compared to the EU average in having started to study an FL in the last 2 years (5% vs. 7%, having continued studying an FL in the last 2 years (12% vs. 14%, or not having studied an FL ever (29% vs. 23%). However, regarding their intention to start studying an FL next year, Hungarians scored slightly higher than the EU average (see Appendix A, Table 1A). These findings also held for the age groups 15-24 and 40-54 (European Commission, 2015).

A next item addressed the participants' perceived advantages of learning a foreign language (European Commission, 2012a, pp. 62-8). Among the sample of 1021 Hungarians participating in the survey, 71% cited 'working in another country' as an advantage (European Commission, 2012b, p. TS2). Although this was a popular advantage in other countries as well, Hungary's participants turned out to be most likely of all to list this advantage. Other advantages often cited by the Hungarian participants also relate to the working context and included 'being able to use the FL at work', and 'to get a better job'. The barrier to learn FL most likely to be listed in Hungary was 'cost' followed by 'motivation' and 'time' (see Appendix A, Table A2 and A3 for the complete lists of advantages and barriers). Lastly, the item concerned with FL facilitators spontaneously elicited the response of 'not wanting to improve upon or learn an FL' with 30% of the Hungarian respondents. In this too, Hungary was rather extreme compared to other countries (European Commission, 2012a, p.88), although it has to be noted that this attitude was not represented in the youngest age group (4,9%) (See Appendix A, Table A4 for a comparison). The Eurobarometer's

findings become even more interesting in the light of the 87% of the Hungarian participants that declared that language improvement should be a policy priority (p.122). In summary, Hungary seems to give a mixed image in relation to foreign language *in numbers*. It is however hard to draw any conclusions about these general attitudes, without having a closer look at how the dynamics of these attitudes work in individuals.

1.1.3. Hungary as language laboratory

Dörnyei et al. (2006) succinctly summarize why Hungary is an especially interesting site for research on FL acquisition by giving two reasons. Firstly, Hungary's recent and large-scale socio-political changes. Obviously this includes the change from a closed Communist society to an open, market-oriented democracy, with as a consequence the abovementioned replacement of Russian in the obligatory FL curriculum, the introduction of foreign TV channels, videos and films, and the hugely increased inter-cultural exchange through both business and tourism. In interaction with these events, Hungary became member of the EU and joined NATO (p.9). Dörnyei et al. (2006) address the impact that each of these processes would have had on any country, but they stress "the fact that [it] occurred in concert created a particularly intensive course of transformation" (p.9).

The second issue affects not just Hungary but the whole world: globalization. One of the ways globalization can be seen to have its linguistic workings in Hungary is the gradual popularity of German (that had been the predominating FL for centuries), being surpassed by English. However, the Act on Public education in Hungary states English to be *a basic right* and not a compulsory FL in secondary education. This is a way to meet the demands for English, but simultaneously protect linguistic diversity (Fischer, 2009, p. 76). Hungary, although small and often forgotten from the perspective of egocentric Western Europe, may indeed prove to be extraordinary fertile ground for research - FL research on attitudes and motivation in particular. The next section will delve into its depths.

1.2. Attitudes and Foreign Language Learning

‘Attitude’ can be defined as “an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of an individual’s beliefs or opinions about the referent” (Gardner, 1985, p. 9). The referent or attitude object is always something rather abstract. However, it can differ in its degree of specificity/generality: the attitude towards learning German grammar can be delineated more easily than for example ethnocentrism (p.9). As aforementioned, attitudes are important to the understanding of FL acquisition as they presumably contribute to success in learning that language (Gardner, 1985). Gardner, Lalonde, and Moorcroft (1987) even go so far as to say that language attitudes “cause motivation” (p.42), and Cochran, McCallum and Bell (2010) also found that attitudes played a large role in aptitude leading to certain exam grades. It has to be noted however, that attitudes do not reflect motivation directly. The presence of favourable attitudes in the absence of genuine efforts can according to Gardner not be called motivation (1985, p.11).

Over the last forty years, many different approaches have been taken to study the role of attitude in FL acquisition. The founding works of this field of research by Gardner and Lambert (1959; 1972) were based on the idea that “students’ attitudes toward the specific language group are bound to influence how successful they will be in incorporating aspects of that language” (Gardner, 1985, p.6). This concept, called *integrative motivation*, formed the basis for Gardner’s (1985) theory of L2 acquisition and is broken down in three main constituents.

- *Integrativeness*, which subsumes integrative orientation, interest in foreign languages, and attitudes towards the L2 (or FL) community.
- *Attitudes towards learning situation*, which subsumes the attitudes towards the evaluation of the teacher, and the evaluation of the course.

- *Motivation*, which includes the effort, attitudes towards L2 (or FL) and the desire to learn the L2 (or FL).

However, Dörnyei (2005) remarks that the triple mentioning of the term *integrative* on three different levels, and the subcomponent ‘motivation’ within an overall construct of ‘Integrative Motivation’ has led to confusion among some researchers, and misinterpretations of the model by other researchers (p.69). As a result, the widely investigated and more simplistic distinction has emerged between *instrumental/utilitarian* attitudes and *integrative/affective* attitudes. Where instrumental attitudes focus on an end goal associated with pragmatic benefits (e.g. economical advances in the form of a better job, educational requirements), integrative attitudes are concerned with meeting new people, learning about the FL culture, or even becoming a part of the FL community (Cortés, 2002, pp. 302-3). However, these two concepts are by no means mutually exclusive, but “are capable of existing within the same individual” (Baker, 1992, p. 35).

Globalization poses a problem for the construct of integrativeness. “Integrativeness in the sense as defined by Gardner involves the language learners’ identification with native speakers of the L2, but for a large number of learners of a variety of languages such as English, German, French and Spanish, integrativeness has no relevance in today’s world” (Kormos & Csizér, 2008, p. 330). Illés and Csizér (2010) amplify this statement through examining the attitudes of 50 secondary school students towards English as an international language. They found that the learners’ awareness of the role of English in international communication did not result in an increased openness towards varieties of English, and participants were not more likely to search contact opportunities. Thus, through the workings of the globalization and the spread of ‘big’ languages, the target FL is no longer associated with specific cultural group but rather with a culturally possibly more neutral international community.

Yashima (2002; 2009, Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide & Shimizu, 2004) intensively studied relations among L2 learning and L2 communication variables among students of English in Japan, and named this particular attitude towards global languages ‘international posture’. “International posture was hypothesized as a general attitude toward the international community that influences English learning and communication among Japanese learners” (Yashima, 2002, p. 63). Through structural equation modeling she demonstrated that international posture influenced motivation and self-confidence through motivation.

Other studies concerned with linguistic self-confidence, or attitudes to the self as a learner often refer to the concept of *self-efficacy*, or “belief in one’s ability to accomplish a task” (Graham, 2006, p. 297). Clément (1980) argues for a central role of self-confidence influencing FL attitudes and learning motivation. According to his investigations, linguistic self-confidence is fuelled by both the quality and the quantity of previous intercultural contact (Dörnyei et al. 2006, p. 27).

Besides intercultural contact, it is imaginable that the direct environment of the individual has influence on his or her attitudes towards FL learning and speaking. ‘Linguistic milieu’ draws upon the direct civil environment of the individual, and appears to have a significant influence on FL learning attitudes. Cortés (2002) investigated the attitudes among 209 youths in the United States through a quantitative analysis of questionnaire data. She found that more positive attitudes correlated with more parental support and that “ [students] who spoke languages other than English at home demonstrated higher attitude scores than did those students whose reported home language was English” (p. 326). The linguistic milieu in this sense does not pertain to the classroom environment, which includes the teacher, his or her methods, and the materials. This too however, is found to have a significant influence on people’s FL learning and attitudes. We will return to this topic in the section discussing research on FL attitudes in Hungary.

Thomas (2010) offered evidence that the language chosen by students may reveal something about their attitudes. Through a questionnaire distributed among US university students that investigated the reasons why students choose a certain FL, he found that the students seeking to meet graduation requirements were more likely to choose Spanish. Students choosing languages such as Hebrew, Italian, Portuguese, Japanese, Chinese (Mandarin) or Korean were more likely to list interest in communication as a reason. Moreover, attitudes towards a language may depend upon its 'ethnolinguistic vitality', a term from Giles and Byrne (1982). This term refers to a particular ethnic's group distinctiveness as a collective entity, which depends on status factors (economic, political, cultural etc.), demographic factors (size and distribution of the group), and support factors (representation of the group to the outside world in media, government etc.) (Dörnyei et al. 2006, p.29).

In the last decade, motivation and attitude have both become to be perceived as increasingly dynamic and complex issues in the field of applied linguistics (Waninge, Dörnyei & De Bot, 2014). Due to the complexity and versatility of the constructs researchers should be warned for a proliferation of related concepts that causes confusion and damages a well-defined foundation of the field (Wesely, 2012, p. S111). The next section provides an overview of research concerned with FL attitudes in Hungary.

1.3. Attitudes and Foreign Language Learning in Hungary

As demonstrated in Section 1.1.3, Hungary provides an interesting research context. Clément (1980) who argued that self-confidence is fed by the quality and quantity intercultural contact, found in an investigation in Hungary (Clément, Dörnyei and Noels, 1994) that the intercultural contact may have the same effects if it is *indirect*. Exposure to popular media, books and news in the target FL may therefore play a significant role in the individual's attitudes towards it.

Kormos et al. (2002) used both a questionnaire as well as interviews to investigate the apparent discrepancy between students' and society's expectations of teaching English language at tertiary level in Hungary. They found that the English language students' motivational profile was rather ambiguous. While the interviews revealed high levels of motivation, they did not invest sufficient energy in maintaining and improving their language competence unless pressured. One of the explanations provided by the authors is the teacher-centred approach to learning FL in Hungary, with teaching materials that do not match the students' interests (p. 80). The finding that teachers in Hungary do not necessarily see it as their job to nurture the students' motivation was also confirmed in other studies (Medgyes & Nikolov, 2014, p.508)

Drawing upon Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self-system that includes slight adjustments to Gardner's traditional concepts of integrativeness and instrumentality, Kormos and Csizér (2008) explored age-related differences in attitudes and motivation concerning learning English as a foreign language among high school student, university students and adult learners. The quantitative analysis of their questionnaire data demonstrated that all three groups were highly motivated. In the two younger participant groups Kormos and Csizér (2008) found a correlation between enjoyment derived from language learning and the students' views of themselves as successful language learners (pp. 22-3). For the adult learners they found that "environment plays an important role in shaping their views of themselves" as language learners.

1.4. The Present Study

The present study aims at investigating attitudes towards FL learning and speaking in Hungary. As the abovementioned review demonstrates, this is a highly complex and dynamic construct. It can be criticized however, that the plethora of related concepts is sometimes confusing rather than clarifying - something that may have already started with Gardner's

fundamental although at times vague concept of integrativeness. Moreover, most of the studies apply large-scale, quantitative research methods, even though the studies often aim at bringing to the surface the particularities of the individual learner (e.g. Cochran et al., 2010; Dörnyei, 2005, Dörnyei et al, 2006; Kormos & Csizér, 2008). Larsen–Freeman’s (2006) study demonstrated that analysis merely based upon group averages was likely to hide important individual patterns of learner development. These patterns in turn only came to the surface with a focus on the individual. The recent work by Waninge et al. (2014) is one of the few studies to demonstrate the utility of micro-scale analysis. Although the findings of the present small-scale investigation may not grant generalization, they may provide fruitful insights into the FL attitudes in present-day Hungary. Lastly, it is understandable that most of these studies are conducted with FL *students* in order to follow the actual process of motivation while studying. However, it is not entirely justified to be surprised about the “high willingness of students to learn language [in] to contrast [to] the actual language competence of the Hungarian population” (Kormos & Csizér, 2008, p. 349) if there is no research is conducted using a population-representative sample.

Drawing upon these observations, Hungary’s background, and the complex literature concerned with FL attitudes and motivation this thesis aimed at using qualitative research methods focused on presently non-active language learners of two different generations. The main research question and sub questions are thus formulated:

- ❖ **What are the individual attitudes towards foreign language learning and speaking among a sample of Hungarians of two different age groups that are not presently studying a foreign language?**
- ❖ What are the attitudes towards unique status of the Hungarian language in relation to FL learning?
- ❖ What are the current attitudes towards the Russian language?

- ❖ What are the current attitudes towards the English language?
- ❖ What are the current attitudes towards other languages?
- ❖ What are the current attitudes towards the importance of FL learning?
- ❖ If 'use' cannot be a motivation, which languages are preferred?

2. Methods

This study used qualitative research methods to explore the attitudes towards FL learning and speaking among a sample of Hungarian adults. According to Denscombe (2003), the versatility of qualitative research methods can be characterized by a concern with meanings and the way that people understand things, as well as a concern with patterns of behavior (p. 267). Importantly however:

“Strictly speaking, it is neither the topics it investigates nor even the nature of its data, which is truly at the heart of qualitative research. What actually separates qualitative research and gives it its distinct identity is the fact that it has its own special approach to the collection and analysis of data, which ... marks it out from its quantitative counterpart” (Denscombe, 2003, p.267).

Similar to Graham (2006) and Kormos, Csizér, Menyhárt and Török (2008), the current investigation placed the understanding of the participants' voice at its core by respecting and giving credibility to their ideas and reasoning.

Lastly, it is important to note that qualitative data are *produced* by the way they are interpreted and used by the researcher (Denscombe, 2005, pp.267-8; Groenewald, 2004, p. 13; Piercy, 2015, p. 2). Section 5 will return to the role of the researcher in this study. Section 2.1 and 2.2 are concerned with the selection of the participants. Section 2.3 and 2.4 respectively describe the collection of the data through semi-structured interviews and the analytic strategy used to process the data.

2.1. Participant Selection

The interviewees for this study were selected using criterion sampling (Patton, 2002), whereby participants have to meet a number of selection criteria. In the current sample, all participants were ethnic Hungarians from Budapest or close surroundings, who had Hungarian as their mother tongue. To limit the sample's variation all subjects had to be in the possession of at least a bachelor's degree, or the older equivalent (*főiskola*) (Medgyes & Miklósy, 2000, p. 167). Moreover, a balance in number was sought between two different age groups. Group 1 consisted of individuals born between 1985 and 1997 (between 18-30 years old), while the participants of Group 2 were born between 1960 and 1975 (between 40-55 years old). The year gap was thus chosen as to prevent overlap between the groups' characteristics. More importantly, this choice is based on the idea that the members of the two categories generally belong to two contrasting generations, despite their relative proximity in years.

The participants in Group 1 can be understood as the first generation reaching adulthood after the collapse of the Hungarian Communist regime. As mentioned in section 1.1.1., foreign language education changed intensively in the period after the fall of the regime. In comparison to Group 2, the members of Group one had much better, although far from ideal, opportunities to learn FL. Besides being raised in an altered educational system, this younger group has grown up, and may be more accustomed to, the rapidly globalizing world (Arnett, 2002; Dörnyei, 2006, pp.19-22), where English has taken an increasingly central role in communication (Yashima, 2002, 2002; Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, & Shimizu, 2004;).

The participants in Group 2 grew up when Russian was the first foreign language taught at school; when good opportunities to learn alternative foreign languages in a classroom setting were scarce, and when travelling abroad was a rather rare event. As

Medgyes and Miklósy (2000, pp.189-190), as well as the Eurobarometer (2012, 2015) point out, this has contributed to the low FL proficiency, among the members of this older generation. It has to be noted that the current group of participants does not reflect the low FL proficiency presented in the Eurobarometer (2015) (see Appendix A for a summary of Hungary's Eurobarometer data). Proficient or not, the members of this group are still in the active years of their lives. The speaking and learning of foreign languages may therefore still matter to them (A. Fenyvesi, personal communication, September 25, 2015).

The task to find enough participants for Group 2 was considerably more complicated, due to willingness, contacts and availability. As a result a slight imbalance exists between the groups: Group 2 consists of four participants and Group 1 of six participants. Moreover, interest in participating in the research was mainly expressed by the women that were approached, this reflected by the larger share of female participants in the study. Gender or sex differences have therefore not been taken into account.

All the possible interviewees available had been approached and preliminary informed about the research in previous months. In preparation of the actual interviewing stage of this research, all interviewees were once more contacted per email, phone, or in person to confirm their participation, and settle a date and time for the interview. The next subsection will briefly discuss the individual participants in order to provide more context, and a point of reference for the analysis.

2. 2. Participant Profiles

This paper discusses the interview data from ten Hungarian individuals whose language learning profiles are briefly represented in Table 2. The changed status of the Russian language mentioned above can be clearly observed. Whereas Russian appears in the L2 education of all participants in Group 2, it is completely absent in the L2 education of Group 1. Among both the older and the younger groups, English B2 language certificates prevail,

Table 2. Language profiles

Name	Sex	Age	L2 Certificate*	Change in competence**	L2 Education***	FL parents ****
Group 1						
Flóra	F	30	English B2, Finnish B1	Finnish ø	EN, LA, SP, FIN	Fa: EN; Mo: EN, GE
Dániel	M	28	English B2	No change	EN, GE	Fa: RU, Mo: EN, RU
Sárolta	F	20	English B2, German B2	No change	EN, GE	Fa: EN, Mo: Romanian
Andrea	F	27	English B2	English C1	EN, FIN, IT	Fa: GE, EN, RU; Mo: EN, RU
Orsolya	F	24	German B2	German B1	EN, GE, LA	Fa: EN, GE; Mo: ø
Eszter	F	28	English B2	No change	EN, GE, FR	Fa: EN; Mo: ø
Group 2						
Zsolt	M	43	English B2	No Change	RU, EN	Fa: ø; Mo: ø
János	M	55	English B2	No Change	RU, EN	Fa: GE, Serbian; Mo: ø
Antónia	F	51	English B2, German C1, Russian C1	Russian ø	RU, EN, GE	Fa: GE; Mo: GE
Herta	F	53	-	-	RU, EN	Father: EN, FR, GE, Serbian; Mo: ø
<p>* B1= Beginner, B2= Intermediate, C1= Advanced</p> <p>** Participants self-assessed the difference in competence since obtaining the language certificate</p> <p>*** EN = English, GE = German, FR = French, RU = Russian, SP = Spanish, FIN = Finnish, IT = Italian, LA = Latin</p> <p>**** Indication of proficiency proved to be problematic, therefore language is only indicated if said to be better than 'basic'</p>						

while all of them have been educated in two or more languages. Furthermore, most

participants indicated that their FL proficiency has been unchanged since the obtaining of the

certificate. No formal tests to assess the truth of this statement have been executed. This was considered to be unnecessary since this study depended upon the participants' subjective attitudes towards foreign language learning and speaking, rather than their foreign language proficiency.

Flóra has been educated in four languages. She obtained two B-level language certificates: one for English and one for Finnish, the latter language certificate of which she has indicated to be currently out-dated. Both Flóra's parents speak English, and her mother also speaks German.

Sárolta as well as Dániel have studied English and German. Sárolta has B2 certificates in both languages, while Dániel has a B2 certificate in English. Both individual's parents speak at least one FL including English, Russian, and Romanian.

Andrea is the only participant who has indicated that her level of proficiency has improved since the obtaining of her certificate for English (from B2 to C1). Besides English, she studied Italian and Finnish. Both her parents speak English and Russian. Her father also speaks German.

Eszter studied the three most commonly spoken FL's in Hungary (Eurobarometer, 2012, p.21) and obtained an English B2 certificate. Her father speaks English.

Among the older age group, Antónia obtained language certificates for all the three languages that she studied in the past. While having a B2 level in English, she obtained German and Russian certificates at C1 level. However, she indicated to have lost her Russian language abilities over the years, while her German and English abilities have not changed. Both Antónia's parents speak German.

Zsolt and János have a somewhat uniform profile despite their age difference. Both have studied English and Russian, and obtained an English B2 certificate. FL proficiency is

not very prevalent among their parents, although János' father spoke both German and Serbian.

With regards to Herta and Orsolya, mother and daughter respectively, some notes have to be made. While the other eight participants form a relatively homogenous group regarding their language abilities, Herta and Orsolya seem to deviate. Both have studied two modern FL's in school, but Orsolya indicated that her German B2 certificate is not up-to-date any more. Herta never obtained a certificate. Unlike the other interviews, which were conducted in English, theirs were conducted in Hungarian. Both the participants' fathers were proficient in at least two FL's, and both have mothers who speak Hungarian only. Although Herta's and Orsolya's language profiles seem to deviate from the other eight participants, their interview data are not considered to be less valuable. Rather, their data may prove themselves interesting and useful in the light of the other patterns that emerge from the analysis. It has to be taken in account however, that there may exist downsides to conducting interviews in Hungarian since this involved a translator (see Section 5 for further discussion).

2.3. Semi-structured Interviews

The aim of this study was to gain a better understanding of the attitudes towards FL learning and speaking in Hungary through semi-structured interviews that are build on language learning experiences. Graham (2006) is one of the few in the field of FL learning who studied the impact of students' language learning beliefs on their FL learning by conducting interviews. Besides Graham's study, Kormos et al. (2008) included a part of their otherwise quantitative research to the collection of data through semi-structured interviews.

All the interviews were conducted face-to-face, in a quiet and comfortable environment. Before starting the interview, the participants completed an informed consent form for the recording of the interview and a short background form (See Appendix B for the complete forms). The forms were written in Hungarian to make sure that everything was well

understood. After signing the consent form, the researcher assured the participants once more assured of the confidentiality of their details. Moreover, it was emphasized that the interview was not aimed at testing their language skills, but at learning about their thoughts and opinions. The reason for implementing this notion in the procedure is that some participants excused themselves for grammar mistakes in their English in preliminary conversations. After the interview participants were thanked and promised to receive the results of the research per email if they were interested.

A few weeks after the interview, a short survey consisting of five questions was sent out digitally (See Appendix C for the survey). It was aimed at verifying some background facts, but it also it asked the interviewees to indicate which factors they perceived most important for FL learning success (See Appendix C, Table A5)

All the interviews were conducted using a pre-established list of open-ended questions (see Appendix D for the complete list of questions) accompanied by “queries that probe for more detailed and contextual data” (Piercy, 2015, p. 1). The interview questions that were prepared beforehand were kept aside on a note as a mere reminder. Some questions were specifically constructed to start the conversation, for example:

- Which foreign languages did you study?
- When did you study foreign [language(s)]?
- Did you enjoy studying foreign language? (Why, or why not?)
- Have you ever had bad experiences learning a foreign language?

Other questions that were generally kept for later stages of the conversation included:

- What do you think of Russian (nowadays)?
- Do you think at studying a foreign language is important (for you/ in general)?
- Do you think it is harder to learn another European language, because Hungarian is very different than most languages in Europe?

- If you would wake up in the morning, and you would instantly speak any language perfectly without having put effort in learning it, which language would this be? (Why?)

This question would be followed up with:

- Unfortunately, it does not work this way. Still, if you had the time, money and possibility, would you try to learn or improve upon [language X]? (Why, or why not?)

Semi-structured interviews were aimed at creating a conversation rather than a rigid question-answer structure. Therefore, questions could vary depending on the course of the conversation, and the willingness of the participants to talk.

The interviews were recorded on a laptop using Audacity 2.1.1.0, and they took 24 minutes on average: the shortest interview was 14:35 minutes and the longest 35:34 minutes.

2.4. Analysis

For the formatting of the data the interviews were transcribed verbatim, including only external interruptions and laughter (See Appendix E for the full transcripts). Moreover, the transcripts were provided with line numbers “to ease referencing during the analysis” (Piercy, 2015, p.4).

The analytic strategies as outlined by Piercy (2015, pp. 3-6), and Denscombe (2003, pp. 267-283) were used to guide the analysis of the transcripts. Piercy (2015) bases her own strategy on McCracken’s (1988) analytical approach that consists of several stages, which in turn largely aligns with Denscombe’s (2003) descriptions.

Both Denscombe (2002, p. 268; 272), and Piercy (2015, p.2) stress the role of the researcher’s *self* in the analysis. Therefore, memos to the self were kept throughout the analysis to keep track on what the interviews “set off in the researcher” (Piercy, 2015, p. 4). This provided insight into the researcher’s own perspectives and biases that could possibly

influence the analysis and interpretation of the data. The most salient example is the researcher's love for learning any language, which could influence the interpretation of participant's statements. Furthermore, memos are useful tools "as a reminder about new thinking ... [and] they act as a log of the developing line of thinking" (Denscombe, 2003, p. 272).

The initial stage of the analysis consisted of reading the transcripts twice: once for content understanding and a second time to "sort[ing] out the important from the unimportant material" (Piercy, 2015, p.4). Thus, in the first reading captions in the margins identified the topics discussed by the interviewee. The second reading involved 'open coding' (Denscombe, 2003, p.271). "The aim of open coding is to discover, name and categorize phenomena; [also] to develop categories in terms of their properties and dimensions" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p.81).

At this point, the different concepts subsumed under 'attitude' as described in Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010) were introduced as preliminary codes: attitude, opinion, belief, interest and value. Briefly defined, attitude, opinion, and belief can be represented respectively as evaluative responses that are increasingly based on fact. Moreover, Dörnyei and Taguchi note that people are often quite aware of their opinions and beliefs, whereas people may not always be "fully conscious of their attitudes" (p.5). 'Interest' and 'value' are both defined as preferences. 'Interest' concerns a preference for a certain activity. "Value' on the other hand, regards a preference for certain "life goals" or "ways of life", and can be used to "describe utility, importance or worth attached to activities, concepts, or objects" (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010, p.5).

The next stage in the analysis was concerned with a "thorough examination of preliminary codes in order to identify connections and develop pattern codes" (Piercy, 2015, p.5). This stage was intertwined with the next, which determines the relevant themes and

interconnections (Denscombe, 2003, pp. 272-3; Piercy, 2015, pp. 5-6). A theme is defined by Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, and Steinmetz (1991) as “a statement of meaning that runs through all or most of the pertinent data, or one in the minority that carries heavy emotional or factual impact” (p.150). Once the themes were determined, the definition of the categories for the final coding could be established (Kormos et al., 2008, p. 72; Piercy, 2015, p. 6).

After an examination of the preliminary coding using Dörnyei’s (2010) concepts however, some other preliminary categories appeared to work even better. Firstly, every language mentioned in each interview formed a category on which attitudes towards that language could converge. This included: English, Finnish, Spanish, German, Russian, Italian, Chinese, Latin, and French (Arabic was mentioned once [See Interview 8, lines 48-51]). Secondly, ‘low FL proficiency’ was a category as the participants tended to start talking about it, even though this was never directly addressed in the interviews. Thirdly, ‘FL learning’ formed a large category that included the following array of attitudinal utterances: FL learning experiences, interest in FL learning, influence of the unique status of Hungarian on FL learning, the teaching system/methods in Hungary, the importance and advantages of FL learning, and the reasons to choose for a certain language. The last preliminary category pertained to the attitudes the participants had towards their own mother tongue, as this often came up in combination with other topics. From these preliminary categories, more general themes could be developed, on which the findings will be based. The next section will discuss the findings, making direct use of the interview transcripts. All the references to the interviews can be found in Appendix E.

3. Results

Four general themes were found in the course of the analysis. Each of these will be discussed below, after which we will proceed to the answering of the research questions and the implications of this study in Section 4 and 5.

3.1 The Joy of Learning a Foreign Language: The Role of The Teacher

In answer to the question whether interviewees liked a language, or enjoyed studying a language, almost all of them provided an answer supported by both positive and negative evaluations of the teacher. Especially Flóra, who studied several languages, made the role of teacher explicit. Having studied English both in high school as well as in other courses to obtain her language certificate, she mentions that she only enjoyed the course outside high school because there the teachers were “nice” (Interview 5, lines 40-44). In relation to Russian, she notes that the students “did not know it could be a joy [to learn Russian]”, because of the teacher (Interview 5, line 111). Dániel thinks that he does not speak a word of German, because the teacher was “a little bit awful”, while he enjoyed English because the teacher made it interesting (interview 6, lines 9-11). Moreover, Sárolta stresses her positive attitude for her English teacher at least twice, and contrasts this with the difficulties she had with learning German (Interview 7, lines 27-34):

T7: She was, she is amazing, I think she is the best teacher in my life, and eh **that’s because I love English and that’s that I never felt it is something difficult thing**, it comes just naturally, because it was never a stressful thing to learn English. **German it was always something eh something bad.**

J: But was that because of the teachers?

T7: **Yes, I think it was**, I think eh it wouldn’t be so difficult if they have more patience for us (...)

Antónia mentions the important role of her first FL teacher “an old lady. Really from an old history” (interview 9, line 118). Lastly, Herta who says that “she cannot learn a language” mentions the teasing behavior of her teacher as one of the reasons why she does not “open [her] mouth” (Interview 3, lines 69-70). Lastly, These findings partly comply with the role of the teacher investigated in Kormos et al. (2002).

3.2. Usefulness or the Absence of Effort: Italian

For a lot of the interviewees language is chosen over its usefulness, which is not peculiar.

Dörnyei et al. also mention that “for many it is the usefulness of the L2 proficiency that provides the greatest driving force to learn the language” (2006, p. 26). Accordingly, Zsolt remarks upon this idea the clearest throughout his interview. He clearly states that a language should be chosen for its importance (interview 1, lines 9-10; 15; 63;69). But János, Orsolya, Herta and Flóra are also unambiguous about the usefulness of certain languages: English in particular. These instrumental attitudes concern access to information, travelling or better jobs. However, they also mention usefulness in the sense of access to popular media like films, books and movies (Dániel, Flóra, János, Orsi, Herta, Andrea).

It is interesting however that in response to the question what language they would like to learn without having to invest effort, time or money in it, was almost unanimously Italian. Not because of its usefulness however, but because of positive attitudes toward the culture, the people, the Italian food and the Italian cities.

3.3. Russian: That Time Is Over?

“It would be naïve to think that the predicament of Russian is still mainly attributable to bitter feelings against the erstwhile oppressor – rather, it has to do with the recognition that the Russian language plays only a negligible role in present-day international communication (Medgyes & Miklósy, 2000, p. 190). In general this study agrees with this statement by Medgyes and Miklósy. Among both the older and the younger generation it seems as if the “bad shade” (Dániel, interview 6) of Russian has disappeared. While the younger generation shows certain indifference toward the language “It’s not my history” (Eszter, interview 2, line 80) three out of the four from the older generation (Herta, János, Zsolt) mention how Russian was disliked in the past. Not only for the politically charged language lessons “So we couldn’t

eh we couldn't ask a glass of water in Russian but we knew a eh the Krásnaya Plóshchad" (Zsolt, interview 1, lines 178-184), but also due to the fact that it was obligatory.

3.4. Foreign Language Should be a Basic Skill, English Even More

The last pervasive theme throughout all the interview concerned the attitude towards foreign language learning. Both Eszter and Antónia mention that it is better to learn at least two or three foreign languages, including English. English "is just a base" (Eszter, interview 2, lines 50-1). Other interviewees do not only mention that English should be a basic skill ("because everyone knows it"), but that FL learning in general should be basic skill "like learning music" (Flóra, interview 5, lines 284-5) that is good for your brain (Andrea, interview 10, line 77; Eszter, interview 2, line 40), that it makes you open, or that it is like swimming (Zsolt, interview 1, lines 53-55).

4. Conclusion

What are the individual attitudes towards foreign language learning and speaking among a sample of Hungarians of two different age groups that are not presently studying a foreign language?

This study found that the attitudes among the participants were in general positive, although for a variety of reasons depending on the FL. Whereas FL learning is seen as a basic skill, English has this status even more: an interesting development, regarding the centuries-long domination of German as the *lingua franca*.

Attitudes to Russian were found to be rather neutral, or even positive and slightly differed between the age groups. Whereas the older generation focused on their memories of politically charged language lessons, and the obligation studying it, the younger generation shows indifference or moderate interest.

Even though Hungarians have such a distinct language, most interviewees were convinced that being Hungarian or speaking such a distinct language does not make it harder to learn a foreign language.

Lastly, motivated by largely “integrative” reasons, an overwhelming enthusiasm for Italian appeared from nearly all the participants - but only if they were asked to imagine a scenario in which they could pick any language they would want to know without having to study for it.

5. Strengths and Limitations of the Study

Unlike the bulk of scholarly work and in line with the more recent developments in the particular field of research, the present study used qualitative to investigate FL attitudes among a small sample of Hungarians. Next to the data’s richness of detail, this method’s great advantage is the chance to have close look at the individual, and often the research setting can be adjusted to the comfort of the participants. Moreover, this type of qualitative research allows ambiguity and alternative explanations.

However, a number of weaknesses in the study leave room for improvement. Firstly, a relatively large device to record is not ideal. Even though the laptop was placed in such a way as to cause as little disturbance as possible in the interaction between participant and researcher, a smaller device is would be more convenient an appropriate to the conversation-like structure of the interviews. Secondly, even though almost all participants agreed upon interview in English, subtleties may not have had the chance to come forward due to a lack of vocabulary.

Moreover, interviewing inexperience of the researcher led to relatively shorter interviews than planned (on average about 15 minutes shorter). This way, the researcher may have missed out on valuable data and detail. Secondly, due to the familiarity with the majority of the interviewees, and the motivation to elicit response it may have happened that the

researcher gave an evaluative response to the participants' utterances. In the future, more neutrality and composure is suggested.

6. Future Research

In the light of the findings, some suggestions can be made for future research. This study focused on Hungary independently from other countries. However, to truly understand the implications of the attitudes towards foreign language in Hungary, several comparative studies would be worth considering.

Even though Hungarian and Finnish are not mutually intelligible and only very distantly related, inhabitants of both countries may experience the nearly total unintelligibility of their mother tongue abroad. Therefore, a comparative research focusing on this aspect would be interesting. On the other hand, the focus could also be on Hungary and the two other countries the bottom of the FL proficiency list in the Eurobarometer (2012a, p.14-15), in order to investigate any pervasive similarities.

As mentioned above, the two participants Orsolya and Herta are mother and daughter. Both have a relatively negative attitude towards themselves as language learners. In continuation of micro-scale analysis of FL attitudes, it would be interesting to conduct a case study exploring the dynamics of their particular attitudes towards foreign language.

Lastly, almost all the participants in the study – some more than others – expressed their attitudes to their own mother tongue (see Appendix E, interview 1, line 131). This aspect has not emerged in the reviewed literature. It is suggested to do further research on the influence of L1 attitudes on L2 attitudes.

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Appendix A

Hungary in Numbers According to the Eurobarometer

Table A1: Foreign language learning behavior between two different age groups (European Commission, 2015)

	Started 2. Yrs.	Cont. 2 yrs	Intention	No intention	Never any	DK
HU average	5%	12%	12%	43%	29%	1%
EU average	7%	14%	8%	44%	23%	5%
HU 15-24	14,6%	42%	21%	16,5%	8,7%	1,0%
EU 15-24	19,4%	44,9%	11,6%	24,5%	4,3%	2,3%
HU 40-54	4,0%	8,1%	11%	51,1%	24,6%	1,8%
EU 40-54	5,5%	10,1%	9,8%	55,2%	15,5%	5,0%

Table A2: Advantages of FL learning between two age groups (European Commission, 2015)

	EU			Hungary		
	Average	15-24	40-54	Average	15-24	40-54
Work in another Country	61%	68,6%	62,4%	71%	84,5%	72,4%
At work	53%	55,5%	52,8%	40%	44,7%	39,3%
Holiday	47%	48,1%	45,3%	26%	31,1%	22,1%
Better job	45%	48,2%	48,0%	56%	45,6%	40,8%
Study abroad	43%	57,3%	43,8%	38%	67%	59,2%
Understand ppl	38%	41,6%	40,5%	29%	30,1%	31,2%
Pers. satisfaction	29%	29,2%	30,6%	19%	12,6%	21,3%
Meet ppl.	29%	35%	30,3%	11%	12,6%	7,4%
Use internet	14%	42,2%	18,5%	8%	10,7%	5,1%
Feel European	10%	10,5%	11,1%	7%	8,7%	5,9%
Keep fam. L	10%	10%	9,7%	7%	5,8%	6,2%
Other	1%	0,7%	0,7%	0%	1,0%	0%
None	2%	0,5%	1,3%	2%	0%	1,8%
DK	1%	0,4%	0,8%	1%	0%	0,7%

Table A3: Barriers to foreign language learning (European Commission, 2015)

	EU	15-24	40-54	HU	15-24	40-54
Motivation	34%	30,9%	38%	36%	26,2%	43%
Time	28%	28,1%	34,3%	28%	29,1%	34,2%
Cost	25%	32,4	28,3%	44%	52,4%	48,2%
Aptitude	19%	18,8%	20,4%	22%	12,6%	24,6%
Opportunity	16%	16,4%	15,6%	12%	17,5%	11,0%
Materials	8%	14,2%	6,7%	4%	7,8%	4,4%
Exposure	5%	6,5%	4,9%	3%	7,8%	1,5%
Place too far	5%	7,0%	5,8%	4%	8,7%	2,2%
Information	4%	5,1%	3,2%	3%	0%	2,6%
c. Language	4%	6,2%	3,6%	3%	3,9%	4,0%
c. Level	3%	3,2%	3,0%	2%	0%	2,9%
Experience	3%	3,6%	2,9%	6%	8,7%	5,1%
Other	2%	1,1%	1,9%	4%	1,0%	0,7%
None	16%	14,0%	12,4%	15%	17,5%	9,2%
DK	4%	2,4%	2,3%	1%	0%	0,7%

Table A4: Participants that do not want to learn or improve upon a foreign language (European Commission, 2015)

	Do not want to learn or improve upon a foreign language
European average	16%
15 - 24	3,1%
40 - 54	12,1%
Hungarian average	30%
15 - 24	4,9%
40 - 54	26,5%

Appendix B

Background and Consent Form

English version

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Please answer the questions below.

Name: Date of birth:

Mother tongue:.....

Highest completed education (underline the appropriate): középiskola - Bachelor (Főiskola) –
Master – Doctorate/PhD

Have you ever lived abroad? (If yes, where and why?):.....

.....
.....

Foreign languages studied:

1.
2.
3.

Does/did your father speak any foreign language(s)?

If yes, which one(s)?

1.
2.
3.

Does/did your mother speak any foreign language(s)?

If yes, which one(s)

1.
2.
3.

Thank you very much for your help!

CONSENT QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Please read the following, and sign if appropriate.

This interview will be about foreign languages. I will ask you some questions about the your language learning experiences and other related issues. The interview will be recorded.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. All information will be treated confidentially. Your answers may contribute to a better understanding of learning foreign languages in Hungary.

You can stop or withdraw your consent at any time during the interview, or after.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to ask them now, or contact me at the following adress:

Julia Verheijden

j.m.verheijden@students.uu.nl

I have read and understood the information written above, and I have received answers to all my questions regarding the interview.

Signature

Datum

Hungarian version

HÁTTÉR INFORMÁCIÓ

Kérem válaszoljon az alábbi személyes kérdésekre.

Név: Születési idő:

Anyanyelv: Hungarian.....

Legmagasabb iskolai végzettség (húzza alá): középiskola - Bachelor (Főiskola) – Master –
Doctorate/PhD

Korábban lakott-e más országban? (Ha igen, hol és miért?):.....

.....

.....

Korábban tanult idegen nyelvek:

4.

5.

6.

Édesapja beszél(t)-e idegen nyelvet/nyelveket?

Ha igen, melyeket?

4.

5.

6.

7.

Édesanyja beszél(t)-e idegen nyelvet/nyelveket?

Ha igen, melyeket?

4.

5.

6.

Nagyon köszönöm a segítséget!

HOZZÁJÁRULÁS KVALITATÍV FELMÉRÉSHEZ

Legyen szíves olvassa el, és írja alá.

Ez az interjú az idegen nyelvekről szól. Kérdéseket fogok feltenni az idegennyelv-tanulási tapasztalataival kapcsolatban, valamint, hogy mit gondol az idegennyelv-tanulásról, a nyelvek használatáról. Az interjúról hangfelvétel készül.

Részvétele ebben a tanulmányban önkéntes. Minden információt bizalmasan kezelek. Válaszai segítenek jobban megérteni a magyarok kapcsolatát az idegen nyelvekkel. Az interjú ideje alatt bármikor visszavonhatja hozzájárulását az adatok felhasználásához.

Amennyiben további kérdése merülne fel, kérdezzen most, vagy lépjen velem kapcsolatba az alábbi címen:

Julia Verheijden

j.m.verheijden@students.uu.nl

Eolvastam és megértettem a fent leírt információkat, minden kérdésemre választ kaptam az interjúval kapcsolatban.

Aláírás

Dátum

Appendix C

Closing Questionnaire Questions

English version

1. Please write your name.....
2. Do you have a language certificate? - Yes/No*
3. Please write down the language and level of your certificate(s) (B1=intermediate; B2= upper-intermediate; C1= advanced).....
4. Do you think you are still at the same level?
 - A. Yes.
 - B. No, I am at the intermediate level now.
 - C. No, I am at the upper-intermediate level now.
 - D. No, I am at the advanced level now.
 - E. Other, namely.....
5. If you do not have a language certificate but you do speak a foreign language, can you estimate your level? (B1=intermediate; B2= upper-intermediate; C1= advanced)
6. Do you think foreign language learning is easy? – Yes/No
7. Which of these languages do you consider to be world languages? –
French/English/German/Spanish/Finnish/Russian
8. Which factor is the most important if you want to succeed in foreign language learning?
Please, list the following items. Start with the one you consider most important.
(a=effort; b= teacher; c= the language d= aptitude)

Thank you!

Hungarian version

1. Kérlek írd le a neved.....

2. Van-e nyelvvizsgád?- Igen/Nem*

3. Kérlek írd le milyen nyelvből és milyen fokú vizsgát tettél. (B1= alapfok, B2=középfok, C1=felsőfok).....

4. Szerinted még mindig ezen a szinten vagy??

A. Igen

B. Nem, most alapfokú a tudásom.

C. Nem, most középfokú a tudásom

D. Nem, most felsőfokú a tudásom

E. Más.....

5. Ha nincs nyelvvizsgád, de beszéls valamilyen idegen nyelven, meg tudnád határozni milyen szinten? (B1= alapfok, B2=középfok, C1=felsőfok)

6. Könnyű-e számodra az idegen nyelv tanulás? – Igen/Nem

7. Szerinted az alábbi nyelvek közül, melyik/melyek világnyelvek?? –

Francia/Angol/Német/Spanyol/Finn/Orosz

8. Mi a legfontosabb dolog, ha sikeres akarsz lenni az idegen nyelv tanulásban?

Kérlek állítsd sorrendbe a következő tényezőket, fontosságuk alapján. Kezdd a legfontosabbal (a=Befektetett munka/gyakorlás; b=Tanár személye; c=A nyelv maga; d=Saját nyelvtanulási képesség)

Nagyon köszönöm!

* Depending on the answer to this question, the participant jumps to either question 3, or question 5.

Table A5: Answers to question 8 in closing questionnaire

Name	Factors influencing FL learning (1= most important, 4= least important)				Which languages do you consider world languages?
	1	2	3	4	
Group 1					
Flóra	Effort	The teacher	The language	Aptitude	EN, SP, FR
Dániel	Aptitude	Effort	The language	The teacher	EN, SP, DE FR
Sárolta	The teacher	Effort	Aptitude	The language	EN, SP, RU
Andrea	Effort	Aptitude	The language	The teacher	EN, SP, DE, FR
Orsolya	Aptitude	Effort	The teacher	The language	EN, DE
Eszter	Effort	The language	The teacher	Aptitude	EN, SP, DE, RU
Group 2					
Zsolt	Effort	Aptitude	The teacher	The language	EN, SP
János	Effort	Aptitude	The language	The teacher	EN
Antónia	Effort	Aptitude	The teacher	The language	EN, SP
Herta	Effort	Aptitude	The teacher	The language	EN, SP, DE, FR

Appendix D

Guiding Interview Questions

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (English version only)

1. Do you think learning foreign language is important? (Why, or why not?)
 - For you personally?
 - (For your children?)
2. Have you ever studied foreign language? (If so, which one(s)?)
3. Do you speak (a) foreign language nowadays? (If so, which one(s)? And when?)
4. When did you first study/learn a foreign language?
5. Did you enjoy it? (Why, or why not?)
6. This is a hypothetical question; please take your time to think about it. If you would wake up in the morning, and you would instantly speak any language perfectly without having put effort in learning it, which language would this be? (Why?)
7. Unfortunately, it does not work this way. Still, if you had the time, money and possibility, would you try to learn or improve upon [language X]? (Why, or why not?)

8. For quite a while and for obvious reasons, Russian had a bad name in Hungary. What do you think about the Russian language nowadays?

9. Do you think it is harder to learn another European language, because Hungarian is very different than most languages in Europe?

10. Have you ever had bad experiences learning a foreign language?

Appendix E

Interview Transcripts

Interview 1 (Zsolt)

[Filling in the consent form and reading the information page. Time to ask questions and another oral emphasis on confidentiality and the fact that there are no good or bad answers, that this interview is not a test]

1 J: Have you studied a foreign language?

2 T1: Uhm, yup, uhm, I have studied uh Russian and uh English.

3 J: Did you both study them in high school?

4 T1: No Russian was from the 5th class of el school and the English from high school, when I was
5 fifteen.

6 J: And English was a language you chose, or was it obligatory?

7 T1: We had to choose one from German or English.

8 J: Why did you choose to study English?

9 T1: I thought it would be more important, at that time I thought English is more important. Because
10 world wide it is more important.

11 J: So it is a useful thing?

12 T1: So, yeah, yes it was useful. Because it was in the Communism ... so it was the last years of the
13 Communism, so from 86' and eh OK

14 German was preferred before because eh we are the neighbours of the Austrians and Germany uh is
15 also quite close to us but worldwide it seemed more important [to learn English].

16 J: You learned Russian because it was obligatory at that time, but did you also study it in high school?

17 T1: Yes, for eight years.

18 J: Do you still speak any Russian?

19 T1: No, just some words. I remember some words but sometimes when I hear any Slavish language I
20 can recognize some.

21 J: Did you enjoy studying languages in school?

22 T1: Ehh ...uhm <laughs>ehh.. yes...but no. <laughs>. So, it depends eh for studying eh ehh regarding
23 the studying ehh the studying is quite hard ehh it is a hard job but eh I like the result.

24 J: Did you enjoy studying Russian?

25 T1: Eh not really, because it was obligatory.

26 J: Okay.

27 T1: Yeah, so compulsory.

28 J: Did you not enjoy it because it was compulsory, or ehm did you also not enjoy it because you did
29 not like the language?

30 T1: Uhm I don't know, because at that time we were in the Communism we didn't like the Russian
31 immigrants in Hungary, so that's why. Probably the language could be good, but we haven't realized
32 that we just did not like Russians.

33 J: And what do you think nowadays of Russian?

34 T1: Nowadays it's eh it's more open, so so now sometimes, so for example I am working for a
35 Chinese company and and for example five years ago frankly speaking I didn't eh want to learn
36 Chinese. So we just we just talking about Asian languages with friends and I said it's absolutely eh
37 impossible to learn Chinese and I don't want to learn. But now it's eh it's really strange, I would learn
38 something eh in Chinese because I eh work for them and and eh sometimes it would be kind if I say
39 just yes or thank you in Russian ehh ehh in Chinese.

- 40 J: Would it be a way to come closer to the people the Chinese people you work with and work for
41 (0.5) contact making would be easier?
- 42 T1: Uh yeah yes and eh now ehh as I mentioned the Chinese people are more sympathetic to me than
43 before.
- 44 J: Ok
- 45 T1: Because eh because we are working together and it is OK
- 46 J: Interesting. So, if you had the time and the possibilities to learn Chinese then you would take the
47 chance?
- 48 T1: Yeah, in entry level I could eh eh I would study probably.
- 49 J: Interesting. So it seems knowing a foreign language for you is important.
- 50 T1: Yes, it's true.
- 51 J: Is that because of you work or do you think it is generally important?
- 52 T1: If you learn languages, you are uh you are then you are more open and then you are more free,
53 probably. Like the swimming. If you can swim, you can leave everywhere. If you cannot swim you
54 cannot leave from the seaside. Because probably if you go into the sea, you will die. So, you could die.
55 So that's why I I ehh I just tell to my wife, that the most important is the swimming because eh eh the
56 most part part of the world is water, so like oceans and sea. And you have to learn languages because
57 when you are abroad you have to communicate with the people so if you cant speak any language you
58 are closed to just your country.
- 59 J: Ok. And for example for Lilus {his daughter} would you put effort in making her learn a language,
60 would you encourage her to learn a foreign language?
- 61 T1: Eh yes. So first of all, English because it's eh I think it's still more important but eh probably
62 <laughs> uh in the future eh probably Chinese, eh I eh I don't don't know. But eh I would choose eh I
63 would suggest to her to choose a language about the importance. So eh so if you can use for example
64 English world wide or Spanish in the Latin countries, then she could she could choose these language,
65 and OK some eh there are some eh impression for example so if she wanted to learn eh Italian because
66 Italian is eh because the culture and the history and because they are happy and so on so it's like a
67 song. The language is like a song it's very simple or...eh. Yes.
- 68 J: So would you encourage her to learn Italian for her personal satisfaction?
- 69 T1: Yes. But, Italian is also eh close to so the importance so we are in the EU so Italy is very close to
70 us. So if she wants to learn for example eh Philippine language I would suggest to change her idea but
71 eh but Italians are eh quite close to us. So yes.
- 72 J: So we talked about this before that people didn't really want to speak Russian because of obvious
73 historical reasons, and nowadays young people kind of want to speak it again. Do you think that is just
74 because it is useful because you live close because Hungary is pretty close to Russia?
- 75 T1: I think yes it's my opinion yes. That's important. Eh.
- 76 J: Ok.
- 77 T1: I don't want to tell you any eh
- 78 J: You're allowed to say everything. That's the point, there is no good or bad.
- 79 T1: I don't think Russian language is really nice or something so eh so if they choose Russian that
80 means because it is important for the future, I think. But for example Spanish and Italian eh sometime
81 they choose just or French because it's the eh sounds.
- 82 J: Hm hm.
- 83 T1: In my opinion.
- 84 J: So, I started this interview because in Hungary quite a low percentage of people speak another
85 language.
- 86 T1: Yeah. Sorry because I have some idea.

87 J: I'm interested.

88 T1: Yeah because in the communism and for example we had a lot of Russian teachers, so Russian
89 language teachers and we didn't have any well-educated English teachers or Germans. So that's why
90 after the reform in the 90's we had to educate first the teachers to the English or the German or any
91 other languages and after they could only teach the people. And on the other hand in my opinion eh at
92 the time we were a quite a poor country..OK we could say that not eh the poorest but I Europe we
93 were a poor country so we didn't we couldn't travel a lot at that time and I think it is very important
94 for a language teacher to live a period in the country where the language is spoken there. So they
95 didn't have experience. So I did have in the 90's some English teacher who never never ever had been
96 in England for example just eh learnt the English language in Hungary <laughs>. And the the
97 pronunciation wasn't nice. She wasn't a good ex eh ex eh

98 J:Example?

99 T1:Yes.

100 J: Do you also think that for example eh, if you learn let's say German. Do you think it is important
101 that someone who is making an effort to learn German should have the opportunity to speak with
102 German people?

103 T1: I think ehh eh at the moment if somebody chooses the German language than eh he or she wants
104 to work. So it's like eh a work possibility in Austria or Germany. I heard eh I don't have any problem
105 with the German language but I heard eh from a lot of people they don't like the German language
106 because they don't like that eh wuawuwawuawua.

107 J:Yes. Ok.

108 T1: So so the pronunciation. But eh.

109 J: What about English? You just said the teacher should go to England to get experienced with the
110 pronunciation. But what do you think of people that learn a foreign language here, just in a course, do
111 you think it's important for them to interact wit native English speakers?

112 T1: yes. I think it is important. And also they can hear from the music for example pop music. It is
113 very often or almost always in English or the computer technics or the IT that's why they do not only
114 choose for have chance to get a job, but eh just for fun the English language. But eh if you compare
115 the German and the English language I think sometimes they just learn English because the computer
116 or the eh music or the American films.

117 J: To get along with the media?

118 T1: Yes.

119 J: So there was this big survey across European countries where people got a list with advantages of
120 learning a foreign language. Hungary scored the highest in Europe on listing working in another
121 country as an advantage. So the European average was 61 % and in Hungary 70% said that.
122 Interestingly, they were almost 20% below the European average of listing meeting other people as an
123 advantage. So that's a funny thing no? It sounds like: we do want to learn a foreign language to work
124 abroad but we don't really see the advantage of meeting other people as an advantage. Do you get
125 what I mean?

126 T1: Yeah eh. I don't know why? Eh, I think first of all and as I heard from foreign people eh the
127 Hungarian people are quite friendly eh eh the hospitality in Hungary is quite good eh so I don't know
128 why they answered that. But it is really true because as I said we were more poor than the Western
129 Europeans so that's why we eh wanted to eh to integrate to have a better life so that's why we thought
130 it is quite important to learn a foreign language, and on the other hand our language is quite a secret
131 language it's eh like an island in the Europe so it's eh we don't have eh really eh neighbours language
132 neighbours in Europe. So for example the Slavish people have a lot of eh Slavish countries and eh they
133 can understand each other eh in a level. So and also eh the Latin countries so for example the

134 Romanians can probably understand the Italians rather well and eh and eh the French also. So for
135 example the eh probably they eh don't feel the importance than us because we are isolated eh if we
136 don't speak any foreign language we cannot understand anybody.

137 J: No. That's makes sense, but do you think for you would it be more enjoyable to learn a language if
138 it was more similar to your own if you had points of recognition?

139 T1: Yes Yeah yes, absolutely. So for example sometimes I just eh look for the eh similarities of for
140 example the weekend it is eh in Hungarian hétvége so it's eh also same week so hét means week and it
141 is the same conception yes. I has some like that, I realized some in the last eh one year I realized the
142 same eh

143 J: They pop up.

144 T1: Yes. So sometimes it really strange, so for example we have vica verza the vice versa we used that
145 and the vica verza and the oda vissza so this is why it came from English or the Latin or I don't know.
146 And we had for example in the past thirty ears ago we had vice házmaster eh hausmeister in German
147 who is the eh who supports the eh no not supports who cares about the whole house - that is a job and
148 vice házmaster was the eh was the second one who also cared about the house. And vice means vice
149 like vice president, president and vice-president. So, it was useful.

150 J: That's interesting I didn't know that. What is also interesting is that from the same big survey
151 research it appears that a lot of Hungarians feel demotivated to learn a foreign language because they
152 say they are bad at languages. Do you think that people are just worse at languages here or indeed we
153 talked about it the threshold is higher, it is indeed more difficult to learn a different language [when
154 you are Hungarian].

155 T1: I think that is the point, that it is more difficult.

156 J: Interesting.

157 T1: And also in the past in the Communism we haven't so we didn't have any eh <sighs> we didn't
158 have any chance or so eh for example my mother wanted to learn German and she eh had a German
159 letter friend and she wanted to visit her letter friend (0,3 s) she was in Eastern Germany eh him and it
160 wasn't eh so it wasn't allowed.

161 J: To study German?

162 T1: No she wasn't allowed to visit eh him that's why she said, Ok I finish German because she
163 couldn't move to abroad so it was the border were close and if the politicians said you will never ever
164 go anywhere than you should stay here, and so they say it is not important because I will never go
165 abroad. So I don't learn any language and so that was in the Communism and so for example my
166 mother didn't learn any more, and that's why I haven't heard any foreign language. So, eh I for
167 example Lila is in better circumstances because we can teach her.

168 J: English

169 T1: Yeah yes, we can help her when she is learning in the school when she is doing her homework,
170 yeah so.

171 J: I have a last question for you. Have you ever had bad experiences when learning a language? Either
172 a bad teacher, or boring materials.

173 T1: Yeah, of course, in Russian.

174 J: Can your remember what was the worst for you?

175 T1: Yeah because when we learn Russian we had to learn any Communist thing so we couldn't - sorry
176 <daughter climbs on lap>

177 J: It's OK

178 T1: So we couldn't eh we couldn't ask a glass of water in Russian but we knew a eh the Krásnaya
179 Plóshchad' that eh means the red square the eh the eh abbey of the it is the abbey on the Red Square so
180 eh.

181 J: But not for a glass of water. T1: No, or bread or something, so we eh so we didn't learn any useful
182 things for the life just, we just learnt some political things and it was very serious so if we eh so if I
183 got some first marks so means some very bad marks because I couldn't explain the *Krásnaya*
184 *Plóshchad'*. So it was boring.

185 J: And the teachers were just Hungarian?

186 T1: They were Hungarians. They spoke Hungarian. But we eh had to learn these things. <*Gestures*
187 *that he has to go*>

Interview 2 (Eszter)

[Filling in the consent form and reading the information page. Time to ask questions and another oral emphasis on confidentiality and the fact that there are no good or bad answers, that this interview is not a test]

- 1 J: So, which languages did you study in school?
2 T2: Eh, English and eh French. Yes.
3 J: Do you still speak some French?
4 T2: Just eh some words because eh it's in the eh secondary school for four years and before I learnt
5 French learnt French eh I learnt English for eight years and I have a very strict teacher, and in French
6 lesson the eh teacher ask a word and always eh my mind goes to English. So, I don't know the word in
7 French because eh so for the first I know it in English and then mm ok.
8 <Interruption>
9 J: So you always compare the to languages.
10 T2: Yes, yes but I like French very much. In my opinion it's a very beautiful language.
11 J: Aha.
12 T2: I like it more than English but I don't know, and I learnt German also.
13 J: You also learnt German?
14 T2: Yes, because primary school it's a eh extra English lessons and German.
15 J: Aha.
16 T2: Eh so once, four {hours} English and three {hours} in the week. So everyday I have lessons eh
17 had lessons.
18 J: And was that obligatory, or you chose to do so?
19 T2: Eh, I chose it I think eh we chose it yes.
20 J: Did you enjoy learning languages then?
21 T2: Yes, I like it.
22 J: Aha, and eh do you have eh like a preference? You said you like French a lot.
23 T2: Yeah eh.
24 J: Is that your favourite, or?
25 T2: Yes, yes!
26 J: Because it's beautiful..., or?
27 T2: Yes.
28 <interruption>
29 T2: It has a beautiful pronunciation and I like eh Romeo and Juliette and eh I saw it in the cine eh in
30 the theatre and before [that] I saw that there is eh a eh CD in French language from the Romeo and
31 Juliette, and I like it so much so I eh wanted to see it. Yes, and eh once time in a lesson in the French
32 lesson with my friend Betti, my class mate eh we put this CD on and we give our class mates eh a
33 paper and the songs, the text of the song is one with some hole and they have to fill in. Yes, and that's
34 my eh *emlék* eh my memory from French.
35 J: Do you think that eh in general learning a foreign language is important?
36 T2: Yes, very.
37 J: Because?
38 T2: Because of eh your mind is another way thinking about maths or any other subjects, so if you
39 know some language eh some foreign language you will be more eh you can think more complicated.
40 J: Your brain is open, it learns something else?
41 T2: Yes, yes, I don't know how to say it, but yes. You understand.

- 42 J: So, in that sense for you does learning another language have this function of also, it's a personal
43 development. So, does it matter to you, which language is important? Or any language is important: if
44 you want to learn a foreign language than it doesn't matter which one.
- 45 T2: I think it's, eh yeah it doesn't matter which one eh because eh in our world English is a basic, you
46 know English it's a basic. You know it everywhere in the world. The other is eh another language, it's
47 a more eh
- 48 <interruption : just additional?> Yes, just additional. I feel English is world language.
- 49 J: It a world language, kind of?
- 50 T2: Yes, but it's just a base. So it's not *többlét*. It's like a poem and you know the writer. So it's a
51 base. But if you know two or three it's eh so good.
- 52 J: Ok, aha. Well than I have a hypothetical question for you. Let's say that eh that you would wake up
53 in the morning and when you wake up there's a language that you speak perfectly – without any effort
54 you just speak it. Which language would that be?
- 55 T2: Ehm, Italian.
- 56 J: Ah Italian. Why Italian, why would that be?
- 57 T2: Eh, because I like the Italian people's habit and the eh the city and so, and the food, and so
58 <laughs> and I like to live there, so for me. And music! Everything comes from Italy - opera, maybe
59 so for me that is important.
- 60 J: The bad thing is of course, is that it doesn't work that way.
- 61 <laughter>
- 62 J: So, why don't you study Italian now? What are the barriers for you not to study it, although you
63 would like this language?
- 64 T2: Eh, because eh now in this life period I have no time. But! I always said to Zsolti eh, I learnt
65 French but now I don't speak. So, I have to eh go for eh go to a teacher because don't want that eh that
66 this eh knowledge eh fades eh disappears. Because I learnt, so I benefacted* I put some energy into
67 that, I invest energy and money and I don't know. So, I don't want it to disappear, I don't want to lose
68 that.
- 69 J: So, if there is no eh you also say you don't really have time to do these things. So, if you had time
70 and the possibility...you would do it?
- 71 T2: Yes, maybe. Maybe because so of my work, it's not the most important thing - in my life, in my
72 work yes in my life, but if eh I am a business man or I don't know and I have time to learn I would
73 learn Italian also and any other languages.
- 74 J: Ok. Nice answers, so it would be Italian and French for you?
- 75 T2: Yes.
- 76 J: Yes, so I think you are to young to have been in school I think to learn Russian in school – Zsolti
77 learnt Russian in school but you didn't- eh what do you think of Russian nowadays? Do you have any
78 feeling towards it, or?
- 79 T2: No. Because just from some stories from Zsolti, but I don't know anything about anything because
80 I learnt it in history lesson, but it's not my history so. But now I know that a lot of Russian people
81 come to Hungary and my eh friend work in a hotel on Margit *sziget* eh Margaret Island and eh a lot of
82 Russian customers they have, and she has to learn Russian. Just some words, but I think Russian is eh
83 Russian language is *nagyon kereset* eh eh
- 84 J: Searched for?
- 85 T2: Yes, I wanted to say that. So that eh for me Russian means that, people search for [it] eh people
86 who know Russian.
- 87 J: But for you personally, there is not much?
- 88 T2: For me, no.

- 89 J: So, I have one last question for you and that is do you think it is harder for Hungarians to learn a
90 foreign language because it's so different from other languages, or you think that is not really a good
91 reason?
- 92 T2: I don't think it depends on this. Because everything is difficult if you don't know, that's my
93 opinion.
- 94 <interruption>
- 95 T2: So, everything is difficult if you don't know. So I don't say that French is eh difficult and English
96 is easier, because why?
- 97 J: You don't know it, so yo also don't know how hard it is?
- 98 T2: Yes. It's the same that eh people say that learning the violin is difficult than to learn piano. No.
99 Everything depends on practice and the teacher, and money and practicing, and you. The first, on you.
- 100 <Husband>
- 101 *Ok, it's true, but I heard from eh for example the Polish people they have eh some pronunciation like*
102 *'whe whe' like the eh 'w' and that's why eh 'why' sometimes eh Hungarians say 'why' and 'where'.*
- 103 T2: But OK, foreign people also did not know 'é' 'e', because they have eh they don't have 'á' like
104 the Hungarian 'á'.
- 105 <Husband>
- 106 *Yes, but that's why 'why' I say that it's eh different and eh that's why it's eh harder to learn eh foreign*
107 *language for a Hungarian, because eh for the Slavish they have some similarity with other languages.*
- 108 T2: Ok, but if you learn Finnish, in the same family. Like Italian and French, you will (()) them.
- 109 J: So, I asked this question and I asked Zsolti as well – there was this huge research eh in Europe
110 about language and eh also in Hungary a lot of people say that eh it's hard eh I don't speak another
111 language because I am not good at learning languages. Now you can ask yourself, ok in Hungary there
112 are a lot of people that are not good at learning languages, or there is something else, or it is indeed
113 that eh English is so different from Hungarian that people feel a bit scared to start learning English.
114 What do you think of that?
- 115 T2: Eh I don't think so.
- 116 J: Why do you think then that people give that as a reason?
- 117 T2: I say maybe you have to try it first and then speak. And eh, a lot of practice. If someone has got
118 dyslexia, you know that he change the letters, it's difficult to learn any languages. Not in English or in
119 eh in French, Hungarian also. Hungarian also, but f somebody hasn't got this dyslex* it's not more
120 difficult than to learn maths or I don't know.
- 121 <Husband>
- 122 *Ok, but what do you think about eh Hungarians are eh speaking less languages than the others?*
- 123 T2: I think it's true.
- 124 *Yes, but are we lazy or?*
- 125 T2: Maybe, or eh or
- 126 J: shy?
- 127 T2: No, eh it depends on school I think and probably we don't have enough teacher and not enough
128 school.
- 129 J: Do you think there are enough opportunities to practice the speaking? To study a language, do you
130 think there are enough way that you can actually talk to someone, or is it mainly grammar?
- 131 T2: Eh mainly grammar, and it's eh it is a big problem, and eh I think my teacher was very good,
132 because we have to learn a lot of conversations from the book.
- 133 J: Aha.
- 134 T2: Yes, but we did not understand why. Why I have to learn 'Hello, my name is.' But these are
135 panels. If you know, you know it every time. I remember exactly that sentence 'Have you ever been to

- 136 America?’ Yes, it was in my book! And now, if someone says ‘present perfect’ than I know ‘Have you
137 ever been to America?’ So, it’s connect.
- 138 J: and you can use it in many different ways.
- 139 T2: Yes, yes but the eh I say that it eh it eh compares. Present perfect ‘have you ever been to
140 America?’ Past tense eh you know.
- 141 J: you think rote learning is helpful?
- 142 T2: Yes, for examples is very important this examples, because it comes to mind.
- 143 <Interruption>
- 144 J: So everyone in University has to get this certificate, but what happens afterwards? Than you
145 actually have to stand on your own feet and maintain this skill. But you said I would like to go back to
146 French, or not because a lot of things depend on it as well.
- 147 T2: Yes, it depends on teacher. The first thing, it depends on you time, your work, your money, but the
148 first your teacher.
- 149 J: That’s the most important.
- 150 T2: Yes, if you like this language, or you like the teacher I don’t like exactly my French teacher, but
151 eh but I like language.
- 152 J: But do you think that a lot of people, so you say teachers are important.
- 153 T2: Yes.
- 154 J: So do you think there are just not enough good teachers here, for people to stay motivated to keep
155 up a language.
- 156 T2: Yes, but I am a teacher, so I know that motivation is the most important in the whole life, in
157 everything.
- 158 J: Yes.
- 159 T2: Everytime. Zsolti says I am *kivánci vagyok* so eh I am curious. He said I am curious for your
160 answers. And I said, ‘ok I am coming. So, motivation.
- 161 <Interruption>
- 162 T2: Ah! I know a very important, so eh in another culture a baby has a baby sitter, and in Hungary the
163 mother is at home with the baby, and in other countries it’s eh for example in your or everywhere the
164 mother goes to work and the baby child has a baby sitter and eh sometimes the baby sitter can maybe,
165 speaks in English or the not in the familys language, but another and maybe.. eh and in other, not in
166 Hungary but in other countries there eh the parents know it will be an advantage if young child learn
167 language. I learnt language not in the primary school I started at the kindergarten. I remember, I learnt
168 some words in the kindergarten, the numbers, the animals and eh coffee.
- 169 J: <laughs> coffee.
- 170 T2: Yes! And I remembered that there is a little class and we go to learn English. In the kindergarten,
171 you know! Eh, so other countries the parents know it’s more important. In Hungary ehh no.
- 172 J: It’s a real present.
- 173 T2: And eh yes, and think about the other countries people eh has more money and more travelling
174 and they can travel a lot with a small child and eh it will stick to the baby.
- 175 <Husband translates>
- 176 *Foreign people has more money and they can eh travel a lot and eh with a small child and the*
177 *influence of the eh so the influence of the city or the eh sea side eh to the child is much more*
178 *important, so eh he can eh*
- 179 T2: Or there is an English mother, and a German father.
- 180 J: Children will play together.
- 181 T2: Yes.
- 182

183 (Stop recording, thanks were given afterwards)

Interview 3 (Herta)

[Filling in the consent form and reading the information page. Time to ask questions and another oral emphasis on confidentiality and the fact that there are no good or bad answers, that this interview is not a test]

- 1 J: Do you think that learning foreign languages is important?
- 2 T3: Uhu, very.
- 3 J: And why?
- 4 T3: I can't talk with you <laughs> because I don't know English. That world has opened; everyone is
5 travelling, that's because. That's why it is a pity that I cannot speak. Internet, travelling, films.
- 6 J: And just for you, it's important too?
- 7 T3: Well, it would be important and unfortunately I cannot speak language but I cannot learn it.
- 8 J: Why not? Because you learnt [it].
- 9 T3: I learnt, but very difficult. There was a teacher that if someone did not speak well, than that would
10 be teased [by the teacher]. That is certainly bad, but I was always thinking - that if many people learnt
11 how to speak languages; they worked abroad and they moved there with their family – if I could ever
12 learn any language.
- 13 B: Did someone from our family move abroad.
- 14 T3: No, no.
- 15 J: So, it was very hard for you to learn a language?
- 16 T3: Uhu. I don't know if something exists like this, that I am more like learning like mathematics, not
17 like rote learning I cannot do rote learning. A different way of thinking.
- 18 J: But, but it was also she did not have a good learning experience?
- 19 T3: Well, possibly it was that. But, certainly there should be something in us, if it exists genetically,
20 that mom also could not learn to speak a language, Orsi is also suffering.
- 21 T3: But grandpa, Bazsi, Peti, they did it like <snaps her fingers>. And dad's brother and sister. I
22 cannot think in other languages, I have to translate everything. That's why I lag behind. That's also a
23 problem.
- 24 J: Do you think, because many Hungarians say that they are not good at learning languages. Do you
25 think that is also, because you know, also because the language is eh so different from all the other
26 languages in Europe?
- 27 T3: Well, I don't now if it is because of that. I don't know, many people say that if you first learn
28 German and then English it's easier, or the other way around I'm not sure. I think that it really does
29 not matter, they're all difficult.
- 30 J: So, it does not matter which language.
- 31 T3: Yes.
- 32 J: I understand. And eh, wait, if you could wake up in the morning and you could speak any language
33 of your choice, without having put any effort in it, which one would that be?
- 34 T3: Well, definitely the English because I studied it. Eh I don't know. Well, I don't know many
35 languages.
- 36 J: Uhu, Dutch?
- 37 T3: I hardly ever hear you speaking Dutch. Always just English.
- 38 J: Why English?
- 39 T3: Because it is so unbelievable waking up and knowing a language without learning, and that's what
40 I already learnt. So, it would be easier then. And it spoken all around, you speak Dutch and in the
41 Netherlands, but no one else.
- 42 J: Just with me.
- 43 T3: You speak English, so then we speak English.

44 J: I understand, but so you cannot wake up like this. If you had the time, the opportunity would you try
45 to learn this language?

46 T3: I decided many times that it cannot be that I cannot learn [a foreign language] but it does.

47 J: Ok. Eh, yes. So, for a long time because of understandable reasons Russian was not very popular in
48 Hungary. What do you think of Russian nowadays?

49 T3: Many study it. Well, so much depends on the teacher and I had a really good teacher at the
50 beginning of primary school eh and at university, but after the first year the teacher died in an accident
51 and there with an adult mind I felt like learning a language more, so after that I did not want to do it
52 anymore.

53 J: Do you like Russian language?

54 T3: Neutral. I don't feel hate against it, it's not better or worse than others.

55 J: And eh, I think we talked about most of it.

56 B: When did you learn a foreign language for the first time?

57 T3: From when I was ten, then it was obligatory to learn Russian. And when I went into gymnasium I
58 started learning English.

59 J: For how many years did you study English?

60 T3: Four. But I am ashamed that compared to the four years of the higher level in English I don't
61 know anything.

62 J: I just want to know how you learnt to speak, maybe doing grammar exercises, or if they also did a
63 lot of speaking exercises.

64 T3: Well, the problem was not grammar or conversation. In Russian classes, the topic was the
65 problem. In the seventh and the eighth class I remember that when we went on a trip to Moscow they
66 had to teach me first how to ask for a glass of water, because until then we only about Lenin in Russia.
67 About the Krásnaya Plóshchad, the Red Square, and the books were not good either.

68 B: And English?

69 T3: Well, in English we had to speak a lot, but if the pronunciation of a word was off, then the teacher
70 corrected me with teasing and that's why I don't open my mouth. Although, I always appreciated
71 those people who just put words next to each other and try a foreign language.

72 J: So, that was a very bad experience?

73 T3: Bad, but I definitely do not have the feeling for languages. If I think about Agi, she eh Tibi's wife
74 for twenty years, she's speaking Serbian quite well although I went there three times yearly with the
75 family, and I only know three words: 'thanks', 'hello', 'bye'. Probably it also counts that Tibi has
76 Serbian friends. I also heard them speaking Serbian and the place where we stayed there the old man
77 could only speak Serbian, my dad's cousin's husband.

78 J: I am curious that, because it strikes me that the experience with this English teacher that she did not
79 make it comfortable to speak. I wonder if this has made a big difference nowadays, if that teacher
80 would have been encouraging to speak. Or whether, so yeah if that would have made a difference.

81 T3: I don't want to blame the teacher hundred per cent, but it created the constraint. Did not matter
82 how many words I had to learn, it was always a big problem for me.

83 J: And the teacher was Hungarian?

84 T3: Well, I am not angry with the teacher, we just had a high school graduation anniversary.

85 J: I am just wondering where these English teachers learn English.

86 T3: I don't know, but I think he/she was in England. That was a big thing then, he/she studied as an
87 English/Spanish teacher.

88 J: What do you think is a bigger advantage of speaking a foreign language. Is that being able to work
89 in another country, or to meet new people?

90 T3: I don't want to work abroad. Don't be stupid when you meet other people [is the bigger
91 advantage].

- 92 J: Hungarians are more likely to list working abroad as an advantage than listing meeting new people,
93 what do you think about that?
- 94 T3: It's not interesting for to work abroad, because I would work in Hungarian schools anyway. When
95 I was a child, I was always a bit jealous of those spending their summers abroad and those who could
96 spend one or two years abroad with their family, because travelling was a very special thing. They
97 came home and already spoke another language. It went really bad at home, so I am not sure if I could
98 have ever learnt a language, even abroad.
- 99 J: Interesting. I wonder if you have any additions that would be interesting in the light of what I am
100 kind of looking for.
- 101 T3: Well, I really enjoy seeing that you the young ones, speak so many languages, the possibilities are
102 also bigger for you. I only have the gymnasium and English next to Russian. You have to study
103 foreign language, but you could chose yourself which ones. It was nice to see that for example in the
104 winter camp, you could sit together and play in English with many others. But I don't think it is good
105 to tie your diploma to a language certificate. Of course, for someone with a diploma it's good to speak
106 a foreign language, but they can also filter you out at a job interview.
- 107 J: Why?
- 108 T3: Because there are people, like Orsi for example that just cannot learn a language, and she does not
109 need it because she is a day care teacher, so she does not need her language day by day. You need it
110 for a general knowledge, but they teach you in primary school, secondary school and university so you
111 have a base. Why do we need an extra exam to get our diplomas? I cannot say an exact percentage, but
112 there are a lot of people struggling with this. And our language education is not on the top yet.
- 113 J: So you are saying that if you don't need it for your daily life, than you should have the choice?
- 114 T3: Yes. Children are learning ten years, four years in primary school and six years in high school, so
115 if these ten years are not enough than there is nothing to do. Why should you struggle with it?
116 Everyone learns a language, but I think it is not fully OK. Children come out from primary school and
117 they're almost all of them are on a different level, so they have to start it from the beginning again.
118 Not perfect yet, but much better than in our time. Nowadays you have the chance to go for exchanges,
119 go for a week there or come for a week here, language trips.
- 120 J: One last, last last question, do you think it is important indeed for language students to have the
121 opportunity to be in touch with the place and the culture of the language that they're studying?
- 122 T3: Not the culture maybe, but the experience that people can understand 'me'. That's why it
123 important. You are worth as many people as many languages you speak. And Irénke néni said
124 whatever you learn, they cannot take away from you, but they are from another generation, they
125 survived worse things. You never know when you need it, and I feel it now. I cannot talk with you and
126 your parents.
- 127 J: Thank you very much!

Interview 4 (Orsolya)

[Filling in the consent form and reading the information page. Time to ask questions and another oral emphasis on confidentiality and the fact that there are no good or bad answers, that this interview is not a test]

- 1 J: Did you study a foreign language?
2 T4: Yes, I studied three languages. German, Latin and English.
3 J: Did you enjoy studying foreign languages?
4 T4: Well, not always. I was not good at it.
5 J: And the teacher, how was she/he?
6 T4: She/he was good, I was just lazy <laughs>.
7 J: Aha, do you think that it's important to learn a foreign language?
8 T4: Yes.
9 J: Why?
10 T4: Because eh, then I can talk to you and I can use wherever with other people.
11 J: And eh, and for Bori, do you think it will be important for her later?
12 T4: Yes.
13 J: Which language?
14 T4: English or German.
15 J: Why English?
16 T4: Because most people speak it.
17 J: So if you could wake up in the morning and speak another language perfectly, without having to put
18 effort in it, which language would that be?
19 T4: English or German.
20 J: Why?
21 T4: Because that's what you can use the best in your life, on most places.
22 J: So, unfortunately it does not work that way. So, if you had the time, the money and the opportunity
23 would you then study these languages?
24 T4: To be honest, I have already tried <laughter>. But to be honest I would like to continue.
25 J: Does it make it harder to study a foreign language, because Hungarian is so different from other
26 European languages?
27 T4: I think so, eh another language, another grammar.
28 J: But the question is really, is it because Hungarian does not really have brother or sister languages,
29 so you don't have that experience of recognizing a your own language in another language. For
30 example if you understand Croatian a bit, than you like to learn Croatian better?
31 T4: That's also a reason, probably.
32 J: Is that also demotivating, that you don't get the feeling really quickly that someone understands
33 you?
34 T4: Eh, yes.
35 J: So, is it a bigger advantage of foreign language to meet other people or to be able to work abroad?
36 T4: Well, both are advantages. For young people meeting others is the advantage.
37 J: And eh, the Russian language was not popular for a long time because of obvious reasons, what do
38 you think nowadays of the Russian language?
39 T4: <laughs> Russian language does not excite me. I couldn't use it, so for what would I use it?
40 J: Do you think it is an understandable reason that older or younger people do not want to speak it
41 because of historical reasons?
42 T4: I think that's over now.
43 J: Did you ever have bad experiences learning a foreign language?

- 44 T4: Yes, we had vocabulary tests every class.
- 45 J: I wonder if the fact that you knew there would be a test every time, it made it also less enjoyable
- 46 because of the pressure.
- 47 T4: Yes, bad grades. So, then you like that much any more.
- 48 J: I understand. When did you first learn foreign languages?
- 49 T4: In fourth class
- 50 J: Until?
- 51 T4: Until the eleventh class. No, we had to learn the second language still in the twelfth class.
- 52 J: So you only had one language in the last year?
- 53 T4: No. Then I'll tell you how it was. From the fifth we learnt German and Latin. Latin was until the
- 54 eighth, German until the tenth, plus I had one extra in the eleventh. English was from the ninth to the
- 55 twelfth.
- 56 J: I wonder what you think about this language certificate?
- 57 T4: I agree with that. Then people are forced to learn at least one language. It's good in this sense.
- 58 J: But, it makes it harder sometimes with a job. As in your case, it was hard to pass the exam, but you
- 59 don't need it for your job. What do you think about that?
- 60 T4: Employers should find a solution, they should ask for a paper that says you finished your final
- 61 exam, instead of just your diploma, which you only get if you have your language certificate. So for
- 62 example, you should get more money if you have your diploma, but you should be able to work
- 63 because you finished your final exam.
- 64 J: Yes. That is good I think. Just a last question. Which language do you think is interesting, besides it
- 65 being useful?
- 66 T4: Italian, because it has temperament.
- 67 J: OK.
- 68 T4: Ok.
- 69 J: Thank you so much!

Interview 5 (Flóra)

[Filling in the consent form and reading the information page. Time to ask questions and another oral emphasis on confidentiality and the fact that there are no good or bad answers, that this interview is not a test]

- 1 J: First I want to know which languages did you study?
2 T5: First English, than I learned Latin, and then Spanish and Finnish.
3 J: Aha, and, when did you start learning languages?
4 T5: In primary school, I think from the third class.
5 J: So from the age of eight/nine nine?
6 T5: Yes, nine.
7 J: And, and afterwards in high school?
8 T5: Yes, English I continued till high school, then I made ehh an an exam for language and then I
9 stopped learning. So, then I didn't learn English anymore. Till ehh well it was tenth class. So, I was
10 sixteen. So. I learned from ten to sixteen.
11 J: But you maintained it, because you still speak English now.
12 T5: Yeah, because I think English is the language that you use the most.
13 J: Yes. But .more than Hungarian?
14 T5: No, no.
15 J: So when do you use English, just in your daily life?
16 T5: Mhmh, yes and sometimes at work, sometimes to get news for my studies for example. During the
17 University I spoke more, because you you could find researches in English, not only in Hungarian so
18 then we had to use, and we had always eh foreign students so we kept contact with them.
19 J: Uhuh yes, and were you always, did you often search contact with the people that spoke different
20 languages?
21 T5: It just happened.
22 J: It just happened, OK. But, so after English you studied Latin and Spanish?
23 T5: Latin I had to, because I had to choose another language in high school, and em it was German or
24 Latin. So, in high school we could learn English, German and Latin. I learned English basically, so I
25 had to choose a second language and I did not like German because of the sound <laughs> So, then I
26 thought OK Latin is OK for me and I was interested in Latin what kind of language is that, and then eh
27 in the eh at the university I started to learn Spanish but it was just for fun. But I can not speak Spanish
28 anymore I guess.
29 J: It didn't stick
30 T5: No ehh no, it's quite an easy language, so the basic sticks but eh...
31 J: Would you be able to pick it up again?
32 T5: Uhhu yeah I think so. There is a lot to do with English as well and also the Latin basics are almost
33 the same so.
34 J: Do you think Latin helped you?
35 T5: Yeah, I think so, the grammar at least.
36 J: Yeah of course, it's a basic for Spanish.
37 T5: And then also Spanish is a type of language what you can hear everywhere. So, all the words and
38 the phrases are familiar to me.
39 J: Did you enjoy learning languages?
40 T5: Eh, yes I guess. Spanish for sure because I chose that, but eh in English I did not have too nice
41 teachers at the grammar school, but then eh I wanted to make this exam eh, which I it was just for a
42 purpose because I need to collect points to get to the university, and if you have this language exam

- 43 than you get more points to get to the university. So, I though OK let's do this exam and eh I took
44 extra lessons for exams and that was for that course I liked, but not at school.
- 45 J: What did you enjoy about learning languages?
- 46 J: Do you know?
- 47 T5: No, I don't know.
- 48 J: Was it something that suits you?
- 49 T5: Uhu yeah. It was like, Ok. It was like that you can understand things. You could read books and
50 listen to music, and you could understand what they are singing about or watch movies, yeah.
- 51 J: That makes sense.
- 52 T5: But that's all, there's no – ya it was like it's kind of necessary but then when you spend more time
53 it is something you start to like.
- 54 J: Could you choose for Russian as well in high school?
- 55 T5: No, no not anymore.
- 56 J: It was not in the program anymore?
- 57 T5: No, I was just in the eh in the switch.
- 58 J: So it was also not offered anymore?
- 59 T5: No.
- 60 J: Ahaa
- 61 T5: Not in ehh our grammar school, because it was a Christian school so they they didn't teach
62 Russian.
- 63 J: I ask this because of course for a lot of people it was obligatory, a lot of people didn't feel motivated
64 to speak it because of the political background
- 65 T5: Yes and the teachers are also, weren't also that motivated. They had to teach eh they don't really
66 well not all of them I can't make it like global, but many of the teachers weren't well educated in
67 Russian language. They also just know what they have in the books for like ten year-olds. They also
68 couldn't speak that well. They only know the songs and the eh the the phrases and not more.
- 69 J: Uhu and that's it.
- 70 T5: And so in this way they couldn't teach like it could be enjoyed.
- 71 J: Hmhm. Yes. So Russian of course had quite a controversial feeling to it
- 72 T5: Yes.
- 73 J: What do you think of Russian nowadays?
- 74 T5: Ah I eh I met with that Slavic languages and if I have to compare I prefer the Polish by the sounds
75 but the after Polish it's the Russian, so if you just listen than it sounds much better than Ukrainian or
76 Slovakian or Serbian.
- 77 J: Can you make a difference between these languages?
- 78 T5: Um, not for hundred per cent, but partly yes, but it's just because I had friends from the
79 surroundings.
- 80 J: Ohh OK. So you've heard it.
- 81 T5: Yes.
- 82 J: What I really wonder about is how important it is to speak a foreign language as a Hungarian?
- 83 T5: Um, I think it is important but it's like eh it's like it is important to learn music, because it's part
84 of you I mean it makes you more open and it's eh you don't need it in Hungary.
- 85 J: You don't need foreign language here.
- 86 T5: Eh, not really.
- 87 J: Why not?
- 88 T5: Because eh you can live a eh eh a complete life without so you can eh. Ok so what do you [I]
89 mean complete. So, if you are just have Hungarian friends of course you don't need foreign language,

90 but maybe then it's not complete. I don't know actually but I feel so. So I am not really using English
91 as I left the school so. OK sometimes I have to keep contact with foreign companies or once I had to
92 make a lesson in English for foreigners about my job or... but that was all

93 J: Aha.

94 T5: And OK I think it depends what what your ... so how so what kind of life do you live because if
95 you are working with a company for a foreign company than for sure you are gonna speak another
96 language.

97 J: So, it should be a free choice whether you want or not.

98 T5: Yes.

99 J: So, what do you think then about the fact that for university here you need a language certificate,
100 what do you think of that?

101 T5: It's strange because I have friends that eh who started university without language and I have
102 friends also youngers* or my younger brother for whom the language was like the foreign language, it
103 was like a normal stuff. So, it was the same like OK we have to make some exam from something
104 else. For them it was easier but that's also because eh the people who are in their forties forty-fives
105 they grown up during the Communism and they did not learn proper languages they couldn't. There
106 weren't enough good teachers.

107 J: Do you think that for the older generation, eh that because there were not enough skilled teachers
108 [and] of course people were not allowed to travel so did not have the opportunity to interact. I mean
109 now we also have the internet of course so that a different way but do you think that for the older
110 generation this might have taken away a lot of the joy of learning a language?

111 T5: They did not know about it that it could be a joy to learn a foreign language

112 J: Aha.

113 T5: They they learned in a really bad eh or not in an enjoyable way y'know?

114 J: Aha.

115 T5: They couldn't catch that it could be useful or if it could be, it was something like - OK this is my
116 opinion - it was something like dangers because if you could speak in a foreign language quite well
117 you could be out of the order of the ordinary people, so they watch you and nobody wanted to have
118 that.

119 J: That feeling.

120 T5: It was better to be ordinary than too be well-qualified in languages because then it was eh

121 J: You stood out?

122 T5: Yes.

123 J: Ah.

124 T5: Yes, but it was many years ago so for example all my grandparents also can speak German, and
125 my mother is also perfect in German and she could speak in English. Not that good way, but she can
126 understand what she needs

127 J: She was taught in school?

128 T5: Yeah, my mother they had a babysitter or something like that who came to them and teach them
129 German and English.

130 J: Yeah.

131 T5: Yeah, but it was also not common, but my grandparents wanted to educate them

132 J: And your dad, does he also speak a foreign language?

133 T5: Yeah, he's eh speaking English - only English eh maybe he can speak German

134 J: When do your parents use it - the same way you use your foreign language? For books and
135 films...or?

136 T5: No, they can't really read I guess and the movies are also with subtitles but they like the original
137 language but they need the subtitles. But they have a lot of friend abroad and they keep in contact with

138 them, so emailing and phoning and we have a lot of visitors. So, they come to my parents and spend a
139 few days there. Yeah, so this way.

140 J: So they keep up, they maintain their language in a way.

141 T5: Yeah but it's just like a tool it's not because of the language but it's like a way to have contact
142 with the others.

143 J: Uhu. Do you think it is important that if for example if you learn French that you should go to
144 France or to also immerse yourself in the culture that belongs to the language or you think that is not
145 necessary?

146 T5: So what do you mean, if we are going to?

147 J: So if you would study French do you think it is important that someone studying French has the
148 opportunity to either talk with native people, they come here, or have the opportunity to go out.

149 T5: Yeah, for sure it helps a lot. When you don't have another chance to speak another language or
150 you have to just speak in your foreign language it makes easier to learn.

151 J: So you went to Finland and you studied Finnish there. So was it because a lot of people say 'oh
152 Finnish and Hungarian, they are so similar' that you also have this idea when you went there that 'oh
153 maybe it's similar'?

154 T5: Yeah, it was strange because I just wanted to spend much more time in Finland, so I was looking
155 for the opportunities how to and there was this language course for one month and that's why I went
156 there. I didn't eh learn Finnish because I wanted to learn Finnish, OK I was curious but eh my first
157 aim was to spend Finland as much time as I can, even if that was the way that I had to learn Finnish.
158 So then I said OK. But so it was it was not for the language study, it was for being there.

159 J: Aha, aha.

160 T5: And it was again the second point where I said OK, alright.

161 J: Would you have learned it if it were not necessary?

162 T5: I don't think so, I don't think so.

163 J: So it was really a tool for you?

164 T5: Eh, yeah but I was not really thinking about it in this really straight way.

165 J: Of course.

166 T5: Because yeah, I didn't do that if I'm not caring so if I give a shit on it.

167 <Laughter>

168 T5: So, I was yeah kind of interested what's going on, because everyone says it's similar and it was.
169 So, when I was travelling by train and I was not paying attention to the crowds and I just heard a
170 Finnish eh sound and yeah sometimes I felt like they are speaking in Hungarian.

171 J: Yeah.

172 T5: So, but then 'what?' but then I pay more attention and then I realized it was Finnish.

173 J: Oh wow.

174 T5: And it also happened that when I started to speak Hungarian, many Finnish people speak to me
175 like 'ah, what type of dialect do you speak of Finnish?'

176 J: Oh wow, so it's actually, there is actually, you do feel. Because you can say it's similar but people
177 react in such a way that there is actually something that connects these languages.

178 T5: Yes, for sure there is something by the sound and the intonations.

179 J: That's super interesting.

180 T5: And that is what Menyus also said, that if you just that if you just have the background voice, you
181 can imagine that it is Hungarian.

182 J: That's so cool. Let me see, we have talked about quite some things. So, yeah, this is a hypothetical
183 question. If you, because you speak quite some languages already, but if you could

184 T5: Yeah I learned <laughs>

- 185 J: Well you speak English well. So, if you could wake up in the morning and speak a language
186 perfectly, without any learning for it. Just wake up and all at once you speak this language, which
187 language would that be?
- 188 T5: Hungarian. Yes, I think it's quite a rich one it has some really small or tiny eh, you know we call it
189 "tasties". The word means the same you can't really explain the difference between two words, which
190 means the same, but they have a different "taste". And that you couldn't find in other languages -
191 maybe because when you're learning a language it's quite a basic vocabulary but it has quite nice ehm
192 and it has those things that also are contrary I find. For example you could be really kind, for example
193 when you are talking with your grandparents and you could be so kind and so closy* but in the same
194 time you say like mister an misses.
- 195 J: Ah, Ok so you can be polite an intimate at the same time.
- 196 T5: Yes, but I mean like high polite, so what you talk like with your professor but you don't use *ön* but
197 another *tetszik*.
- 198 J: Aha ok. So, eh what do you think I mean what do you think what does it mean to you to speak
199 Hungarian? Does it make you proud that you speak Hungarian or?
- 200 T5: Well, it's a hard question.
- 201 J: Yes, it is, but you can think about it.
- 202 T5: Ya, I don't really think about it if it makes me proud or that I'm speaking Hungarian but I like it
203 that not many people understand it. So, it's a eh
- 204 J: Secret language?
- 205 T5: Yeah, it's kind of a secret language and I also like it because when somebody learnt Hungarian
206 they really like to learn it. So, it's not like German what most of the students who are learning German
207 are like 'arghh OK I need it but arghh' it's just sounds like a shit, you know? So, it's something like
208 that, but also not that much (()) when you are learning for example Italian or Spanish you became like
209 ah yay a ya you are learning ah ya and not like Chinese. When somebody say you are learning Chinese
210 than it's like 'OK are you crazy?' It's something in the middle.
- 211 J: Why are people crazy when they learn Chinese?
- 212 T5: Because it's quite a difficult language and show some places where you can use it
- 213 J: Yeah, that's true.
- 214 T5: I think it's something useless, I mean now. But can we see in five years?
- 215 J: Ya, maybe. So eh ya, that actually ties into this. So, ehm there was a really big research about
216 language here in Hungary and in Europe and a lot Hungarians say, more than any other people in
217 Europe, they say that as a reason not to learn language, or as a reason to feel discouraged to learn a
218 language they say they are not good at learning languages. Now, it can be that in Hungary there is just
219 a bigger percentage of people that is not good at learning languages but I don't think so. I think people
220 are pretty similar in a way. So, you have ideas about this if Hungarians are so different.
- 221 T5: Yeah I think so, because the Hungarian language is quite different if you start to learn a Slavic
222 language you can learn another Slavic language quite (0.3s) you you can succeed earlier in studying
223 language.
- 224 J: Do you mean there is a higher threshold?
- 225 T5: Yes, I guess.
- 226 J: Do you think a lot of people are just scared that it's so different or they feel discouraged because it's
227 so different?
- 228 T5: Yeah, and I think there is some kind of, so the Hungarian people are more shy, I guess. And, ya
229 it's also similar to the Finnish people that they are not like, so they are not the nation who wants to
230 have more fields, you know? So, they like to be here, they like their own companies, their own
231 families and that is more important than to go abroad and look around what is going on. But ehm, it a
232 kind of shy, yes.

- 233 J: They're for themselves, Hungarian is enough for them, maybe?
- 234 T5: It's a good question. I think more Hungarians can understand other languages but they do not dare
235 to speak or just use it for the things that have to do, or OK for the entertainment but not lot more.
- 236 J: Let me see. So, yeah have you ever had bad experiences when learning a language?
- 237 T5: Yes, Latin was quite hard. Sometimes I couldn't get why..so the grammar was difficult. I could
238 translate sentences and then when we corrected the test it was quite different. Like eh, 'banana' and
239 'apple' and I was quite sure that I know it.
- 240 J: What was the language that you enjoyed the most, or was the easiest for you?
- 241 T5: I think Finnish, because yah. But that was also because we had really nice class and really nice
242 teachers. We have been in Finland, we had so much fun together there was nothing else to do, so we
243 had to learn a language.
- 244 J: There was nothing else to do, so we started to learn a language.
- 245 <laughter>
- 246 T5: I mean, we had only language courses we did not do any maths or history, it was all about Finnish.
- 247 J: you got involved in it.
- 248 T5: Yeah. But I also liked the Spanish one because I learnt it in the Spanish institute in Budapest and
249 they also had nice teachers so I liked that so much.
- 250 J: Aha, that made a big difference, I guess.
- 251 T5: It's it's, I think it is all about the teacher.
- 252 J: OK, let me see. I think I have asked you all my questions. But what I wonder still though ehm is
253 there anything that I am missing out on or that you think is interesting to add.
- 254 T5: Let me think. Yeah it is strange. I don't think there is an answer for it. It's eh kind of an evolution,
255 there are also reasons and cases and it's going like that. Because when we were we've been younger,
256 so I mean primary school so we did not have that much English connection we did not have Cartoon
257 network, no Internet. So now, now you meet with the language more or foreign languages more. I
258 don't know why English became...but I also see huge damage of the languages. Because more people
259 are using it and obviously they're not using it in a proper way. So, it's always strange when we have
260 been together with foreign students and there was a girl from eh Great Britain and she was the one
261 who could not understand us. But in the same time she spoke the proper English, and she couldn't
262 understand phrases or this, what other students foreign students could understand properly. So, it was
263 strange.
- 264 J: Very strange.
- 265 T5: Also, I recognise it in Hungarian that we started to use more foreign words, and it means it
266 damages in a way our language.
- 267 J: Would you prefer it if it was kept like, pure, if it was protected in a sense?
- 268 T5: Ehm, ya it is a difficult question, because yes in a way I don't like it that eh now – it just happened
269 a month ago or maybe three or more, but not really a long time ago that there is a new Hungarian
270 vocabulary book.
- 271 J: Yes
- 272 T5: And it is about so many things, which and I also don't like when people when somebody says
273 something in that way.
- 274 J: When he speaks and makes a sentence that puts an English word in?
- 275 T5: Not only English words, but in eh make eh the grammar incorrectly. It's it's, so you know we
276 match a lot of things after the words and now the vocabulary, the official vocabulary allows a lot of eh
277 what's that
- 278 J: The suffixes?

- 279 T5: Yeah yeah yeah, yes they allow more to do than it was correct before and I think that is not the
280 nice way. But they said Ok it has become so common, so they had to follow.
- 281 J: What the people do.
- 282 T5: Yes. So, in this way I don't like it. But, OK you have to learn eh a foreign language and I think it
283 was like that, if you are just thinking about aristocracy they all had German sister and French noun and
284 stuff. So, that was in the basic education, you know. So, that's important that it's in education but like
285 like music for example.
- 286 J: Yes, I get that.
- 287 T5: And also the English people say that for example that American is so bad for them, because they
288 made the English so poor. So, as many people started to speak the language, it became more poor.
- 289 J: It's interesting to see your perspective. I grew up in the country were you don't even think about
290 having to learn a foreign language. So what you said about your brother. For us it is actually the
291 opposite. Who the hell speaks Dutch, so let's speak other languages because no one is going to learn
292 Dutch and of course we had a lot of trade. Our tiny country always lived for trade and it is interesting
293 to see that in Hungary were it is also 'who the hell is going to learn Hungarian' here it is like: " We
294 speak Hungarian, so what?" That's the feeling
- 295 T5: It's true
- 296 J: I have no clue if that's true eh but I really like this opposition.
- 297 T5: Yeah, but that is strange. I don't know why it is like that.
- 298 J: Maybe, you also said Hungarians are shy. We come to you and you're more like: Ok, if you come to
299 us and you're close then.
- 300 T5: And for example there are a lot of tiny nations living in this area, but all of them had to learn
301 Hungarian.
- 302 J: Yes.
- 303 T5: It's interesting, we have the first name, the family name and it's eh sometimes Horváth and Tóth,
304 that's Slavic a small (()) and there are living in this and Németh there is also a family name like this
305 and we always put an 'h' after it and this 'h' means 'Hungarian'.
- 306 J: Wow.
- 307 T5: The Croatian people who lived in Hungary were the Horváth and it also became a family name.
308 And to sign it that OK, they are living in Hungary so they put an 'h'. But these are like the nation
309 names.
- 310 J: Oh wow. Well, thank you for this conversation.
- 311 T5: Good luck with your research.
- 312 J: Thanks.

Interview 6 (Dániel)

[Filling in the consent form and reading the information page. Time to ask questions and another oral emphasis on confidentiality and the fact that there are no good or bad answers, that this interview is not a test]

- 1 J: First I need to know which languages did you study?
2 T6: English.
3 J: English.
4 T6: I learnt English in elementary school, then in high school and eh in high school I learnt German
5 too, for four years.
6 J: Did you have to choose another second language in high school?
7 T6: Yes, yes in high school.
8 J: And did you enjoy studying language?
9 T6: Eh, I did not really enjoy German because eh my teacher was a little bit awful, eh so I cannot say
10 that I can speak any word in German. Eh, the English language is kind of interesting to me, and I like
11 that. I had good teachers in high school, so I enjoy that lessons.
12 J: What does a good teacher make? When does a teacher make it more enjoyable?
13 T6: When he or she tries to make it eh interesting.
14 J: Aha. Does that also include more speaking, more speaking than just learning grammar rules all the
15 time?
16 T6: No, no no, I think good teachers try to make it eh interactive and and eh I think eh most important
17 thing is to speak the language, and then I think maybe eh eh it can be easier to learn the grammar
18 when you speak a lot.
19 J: that makes sense. Do you think it is important, that is it important to speak a foreign language?
20 T6: Yes.
21 <laughter>
22 J: But why?
23 T6: Eh, why. Why is it so important. I'm sorryy.
24 J: Take your time.
25 T6: I'm trying to find the right words.
26 J: It's not flash lighting questions, you can think about the questions, no problem.
27 T6: Eh I think eh learning languages is the same thing when you want to learn everything about the
28 world. An, so I think eh learning languages is eh its eh
29 J: A tool... or?
30 T6: Yeah yeah, you can use it as a tool when you want to travel or something, and the other way that
31 could be interesting. So, when you are interested in learning languages.
32 J: Aha. Ok.
33 T6: I think that is the two types of it.
34 J: Aha. And what is it for you mainly?
35 T6: For me it is a tool.
36 J: Aha.
37 T6: Because I think eh, I am a bad eh, no that is not the right sentence. So I cannot learn languages
38 easily.
39 J: Does it make it less enjoyable because you think you are not good at languages?
40 T6: Yes, a little bit.
41 J: I get that. What do you think of the language requirement? Because for university you all need a
42 language requirement.

- 43 T6: Yes, eh. I have a certificate in middle level certificate. I think it was not very hard for me eh, I did
44 that when I was eighteen. So it was a long time ago, but I think it's eh an easy thing to make. It's
45 because eh I am in. You know, it was at the end of the high school, I was learning for nearly ten years
46 and I am in learning so it was easy buy that time. But now, if I have to take the exams right now,
47 maybe I will die.
- 48 J: But we can have a conversation, no? So it works quite well.
- 49 T6: <laughs> Yeah, maybe.
- 50 J: And, eh when do you use your English mainly?
- 51 T6: When I watch a movie or listen to music, or in a year one or two times I go abroad, sfor travelling.
52 Reading, any any eh journals or something, like that.
- 53 J: Do you think it is a big advantage to learn a foreign language because it means you can work
54 abroad?
- 55 T6: Yes.
- 56 J: And do you think the advantage of being able to work abroad is a bigger advantage than meeting
57 people from other countries?
- 58 T6: That's a good question, a good question. Eh, maybe the first way, to get abroad to take advantage
59 is a practical thing, but eh yes meeting is also important, to meet. Last year I was in Dublin, visiting
60 my sister and I checked the zoo and I met some eh keepers and we have some little chat. Not long, one
61 or two minutes, but we can make a connection and we can talk Facebook after that, so it was a good
62 thing for me.
- 63 J: Yes, I can understand that. Absolutely. So, besides that you already speak English, if you could
64 wake up in the morning and speak a language, perfectly. Without having to study for it, you just wake
65 up in the morning and speak a language, which language would that be?
- 66 T6: <laughs> Not English. Some kind of a, I want to learn a language that is a little bit harder. If I had
67 that situation I could speak easily after that. Maybe, some some eh Asian language. But, it's just a
68 practical thing. So if I think about that, that I wake up and oh I know Chinese that would be so cool.
- 69 J: And that would just be because it's a very different language?
- 70 T6: Yes, and it is hard to learn. Not to to just dream it.
- 71 J: Yeah. I would like to learn Papuan New Guinean, one of the 6000 languages, or I don't know how
72 many languages they have there – a lot. But so, yeah unfortunately it does not work that way, so you
73 cannot wake up and know one in the morning. So if you had the time, and the opportunity and the
74 motivation, which one would it be? When you actually have to do it on your own power.
- 75 T6: I never thought about it. Eh, maybe eh maybe French, I don't know, I have never thought about it.
- 76 J: Why would French be an option?
- 77 T6: I don't know, because I like it.
- 78 J: Because it sounds nice or...?
- 79 T6: Yes. Eh, mostly when it is singing. The chansons <laughter>.
- 80 J: <laughter> yes. Well let's keep going. So, for a really long time in Hungary, Russian was a
81 compulsory part of the education system, but still not a lot of people actually spoke Russian, because
82 they also did not feel motivated. Obviously, because there were a lot of political background reasons
83 to it.
- 84 T6: And you have to learn it, it was the only one.
- 85 J: So, I am just wondering. What do you think of Russian nowadays?
- 86 T6: I don't have a problem with that. There was a time at university that I had two friends from Russia
87 and they I have the idea to teach me because eh it sounds interesting to me so ehh.
- 88 J: So you think he bad shade of it is definitely gone?
- 89 T6: For me yes, absolutely, and when I talked to my parents about that, because they always said they
90 had to learn Russian and they didn't know any words - maybe just a few words that they remember.

- 91 But they say, not that the problem is that they have* to learn that. If they have to choose than maybe
92 not.
- 93 J: Do you think it is also, I mean your parents' generation is also different from your grandparents'
94 generation. I mean between the 50's and the 60's that was a pretty heavy time in Communism.
- 95 T6: Yes.
- 96 J: Do you think, for example for this generation Russian still has a bad shade over it, or have they
97 moved on?
- 98 T6: Sorry, can you repeat the question I don't get it.
- 99 J: So, for you Russian is interesting just like any other language. Whereas for your parents they
100 remember that they had to and they don't really feel like it because they had a choice. But in a sense,
101 your parents are...
- 102 T6: End fifty and sixty.
- 103 J: Yeah, so, But people even older than that, they grew up in the 50 's and the 60's and that was a hard
104 time. Do you have any idea, of for these people still has a bad name or even for this older generation
105 they don't think about it anymore.
- 106 T6: The second way, absolutely.
- 107 J: So, it is also just a language.
- 108 T6: Yes.
- 109 J: Ok. Well, let me see. We have talked about a lot of things.
- 110 T6: I don't like to mix in the political things.
- 111 J: No, ok. Well often language and politics are often mixed. Apparently, the way people look at it now
112 it doesn't seem that mixed at all. It could be that everyone would say: no, I don't want to learn
113 Russian, I rather learn English because of eh whatever. Anyway, so there was a big research here in
114 Hungary about language and other things and a lot of people said that they feel discouraged to learn a
115 language, because Hungarian is so different from all the other European languages. What do you think
116 about it? Do you think it also, that it makes it harder because it is so different?
- 117 T6: Maybe.
- 118 J: Or from your own experience.
- 119 T6: Eh I don't know. I try to remember any stories. I think just that it is a very unique language in
120 Europe, because I cannot say any other countries in Europe speak our language.
- 121 J: That's true. What do you think yourself, about speaking Hungarian that is so different from all the
122 other languages?
- 123 T6: I really like it. Especially, when I am in some other countries and be with another Hungarian and
124 talk Hungarian and people just look super weird like "what is that kind of language?". There is a story
125 eh was in Dublin wth my sister and we had some eh hard drink in a square a little bit loudly and just
126 look around. <laughs>
- 127 J: You can swear all you want. <laughs>
- 128 T6: <laughs> yeah. So, it's a good feeling to have a unique language.
- 129 J: So as if you have something that is really your own, that even when you are abroad there is
130 something that is really yours.
- 131 T6: Yes, and it is a funny moment when a foreigner comes to Hungary and tries to teach*[learn] some
132 Hungarian language, eh Hungarian words sorry. It's it's a eh very funny, because when an English
133 person sits next to me and tries to teach me some English words or so, it's OK, it's not really eh hard
134 thing.
- 135 J: No. I wonder if you eh, did you ever have bad experiences learning a language? Either at school, or
136 anywhere.
- 137 T6: That that eh German teacher.

- 138 J: Because she did not make it interesting. Was she also unfriendly or?
139 T6: No no, she wasn't. Just boring. She cannot make us pay attention. She came in, she talks about
140 something and nobody cares. Everbody is talking to each other and this is it. She was a tiny little girl,
141 quite young to be a teacher and eh she hasn't got any power to make us pay attention. <laughs>
142 J:<laughs> With fourteen-year-old boys in the class.
143 T6: Yeah <laughs>.
144 J: Anyway , ehh let me see if there is some burning other question. Yeah, so you started learning in
145 primary school?
146 T6: Yes.
147 J: The fourth class or something?
148 T6: Eh, yes.
149 J: Ah, that's what I thought. So, eh nope. I think we have covered pretty much everything.
150 T6: That would be it.
151 J: Yes. Thank you so much.

Interview 7 (Sárolta)

[Filling in the consent form and reading the information page. Time to ask questions and another oral emphasis on confidentiality and the fact that there are no good or bad answers, that this interview is not a test]

- 1 J: You studied English and German in high school, right?
- 2 T7: Yes.
- 3 J: When did you start studying any of these?
- 4 T7: Eh, English was my first [foreign] language, I started it in [the] fourth grade and eh then I went to
5 high school and I started eh with German from fifth grade and until the end, and we have to learn plus
6 from the eighth grade, English as well. So I renew my English language. Everybody has to learn a
7 language, so it was useful. It wasn't complicated.
- 8 J: Did you also study Spanish, or you wanted to?
- 9 T7: Next year I want to.
- 10 J: Why?
- 11 T7: Because it is also a very popular language and it sounds very nice for me. I love it. Yes, and part
12 of my family also speaks Spanish, because my uncle lives and works as a diplomat, and they lived in
13 Madrid for four years.
- 14 J: Cool.
- 15 T7: We went to there and it was a very nice area and the atmosphere was very catchy, and eh and they
16 speak very well in Spanish. So it was an inspiration to to study a new language and honestly I am
17 really bored with these two. German and English I really hate, I really don't want to buy a new book
18 of English or German grammar or anything like this, I am really bored of that.
- 19 J: Do you think grammar is boring in general? It's not, I mean, you just don't really enjoy studying
20 that part of language learning?
- 21 T7: German language eh is very complicated for me, but I think it is because of my school. Because eh
22 I have very eh I have lots of different teachers and I always have to start to eh get to eh used to a new
23 style of teaching, because eh -. It's complicated and it was the beginning, which was I think the most
24 important time in my language studying or studies and eh because the beginning was hard this is eh
25 very eh very intensive feeling that maybe I feel that I can't learn German, because it's something
26 strange thing that I can't learn German grammar and things, and for example my English teacher was
27 very nice. She was, she is amazing, I think she is the best teacher in my life, and eh that's because I
28 love English and that's that I never felt it is something difficult thing, it comes just naturally, because
29 it was never a stressful thing to learn English. German it was always something eh something bad.
- 30 J: But was that because of the teachers?
- 31 T7: Yes, I think it was, I think eh it wouldn't be so difficult if they have more patience for us and yes
32 it's it's a totally different style for us. So, so for example last year when I practiced a lot of German it
33 was quite good, it liked German very much, because I feel [felt] that I can do this and it's not so hard
34 that it was and it's not such a bad thing to learn German, but eh but in high school it was very eh it
35 was very eh it was difficult, yes this is the best eh yes.
- 36 J: In general, do you enjoy the idea of learning a language, or do you enjoy learning a language in
37 general?
- 38 T7: Yes, I think it is very important. For example, my university is always (()) it's always very useful
39 to learning a new language, because I really like you know, a new culture and I think to learn this
40 culture's language is the best point to know the culture and why people do things or no.
- 41 J: Just like an entrance into it?
- 42 T7: Yes. So, I really would like to know new language. It's very, it's very important. It's quite
43 difficult sometimes, but it's worth the things.

44 J: And do you think it's important that everyone speaks at least another foreign language? Do you
45 think speaking a foreign language should be important to everyone?

46 T7: Yes, I think. It can be very difficult to someone when you are in a group and someone doesn't take
47 things so easily done as the others, so it's always 'why? why?' what did you say?'. For example
48 Marcika's friends, Dani and his girlfriend who came from Latvia and she is studying Hungarian a bit,
49 but she hates the situation when we speak together in Hungarian and she doesn't get it. So, it was
50 always very stressful when she was there, because we know she doesn't want to speak in Hungarian,
51 so it was not such a nice time together.

52 J: Do you think that if you would go to Spain, you would try to learn Spanish?

53 T7: Uhu [yes]

54 J: Do you also think that if people come here, they should at least make an effort to get to know the
55 Hungarian language a bit better?

56 T7: Yes, I think. It's eh it's very nice way to know better people. So, so eh it's a very important step, I
57 think. To become friends or anything.

58 J: There was a research in Europe and also in Hungary about language and there was one question in
59 this research that said 'so, what do you think is an advantage of learning a new language?' and most
60 people actually in Hungary most people said, more than in any other European country, Hungarian
61 people said eh 'then you can work in another country'. That was the biggest advantage for eh them.

62 T7: Uhu.

63 J: The smallest advantage eh, the smallest compared to all the other countries was 'to meet new
64 people'. What do you think yourself? Are these advantages similarly important, or do you think one is
65 more important than the other?

66 T7: Eh I think also that's a very important advantage that I can work in other countries eh because in
67 this century it is almost naturally for everyone to speak German or to speak English and work
68 somewhere else. Maybe in another country there are better work places or something. So, maybe
69 maybe it's very similar for me. I also want to know new faces and to another culture gastronomy or
70 anything, and maybe eh maybe I am too young to thinking about working in another country, but I
71 think later I want to go to somewhere else, just eh just see the world and just eh learning new methods
72 of work or another atmosphere. So, later I definitely want to another country, but I want to come back.
73 So, I think I couldn't do this that I move out to London or I don't think or somewhere else eh

74 J: Like most of the Hungarians

75 T7: <laughs> Yes, yes and then a new family there and sometimes to Christmas to come home en eh
76 that's not my style. It's really important, my culture and my life here in Hungary.

77 J: Does it, and this is a very hard question, a very open question, but maybe you can say something
78 about it. What does it mean to you to speak Hungarian - the fact that you are Hungarian and speak
79 Hungarian?

80 T7: Eh, I think it's a very nice present for me, maybe, because I really love Hungarian language. This
81 was one of my favourite facts [subjects] in high school, that's because of my family. They really like
82 the Hungarian literature and everything about the Hungarian language, so it was natural for me. But I
83 really like it, so it's I eh I cannot live without my own language, but I can say things out [express] in
84 my own way, we have lots of opportunities to make eh to say things out. So it's very nice and it's
85 beautiful also, of course. It has a very magical style, I can, I think it's – just read a Hungarian poem, or
86 a book, or a novel. It's so different for me than just learn a German novel. It's something else I cannot
87 explain it. It's in my heart it, or I don't know.

88 J: Yes, I understand it. I think it's a very beautiful language as well. And it's interesting that the same
89 research I was talking about before, actually a lot of Hungarians, more than in any other country in
90 Europe, said that they don't really want to learn a language, or it is hard for them to learn a language
91 because, they say, they're not good at learning languages. Now it can be, that indeed in Hungary there

92 is an extraordinary amount of people that are not good at learning languages, that's possible. But, it's
93 also a possibility that there is another reason why people think like this. Why would people think this,
94 that they are not good at learning languages? It's an interesting question, what do you think?

95 T7: I think eh, when I felt I cannot learn a language that was very eh that was very important question
96 with my teacher. As I said my English teacher, one of my friends almost, because she is one of my
97 sister's friends, she is amazing; she is the best teacher I ever met. She is natural and don't make things
98 complicated and it was a nice job to learn a new language with her, but eh in high school it was just
99 something that I have to do. So it wasn't because I want to, I it was because everybody else has to so I
100 also have too. And the methods of learning or teaching, I think this is the problem in Hungary. One of
101 the problem and the other is our low self-esteem, because it's, maybe sometimes it's easier to say that
102 I cannot learn than I want to learn.

103 J: I want to learn, but I'm afraid to talk or..

104 T7: Yeah.

105 J: Do you think it could be a reason or do you think it might be harder for people in Hungary to learn
106 another language because Hungarian is so very different from the other languages that are generally
107 taught in your generation?

108 T7: Maybe the grammar, but at all I don't think it's eh it's a so bigger problem for us. I don't eh, I has
109 some point lots of similarities and eh I never felt I can't do this because I am Hungarian. Maybe the
110 grammar somewhere is problem, but we just have to get used to it and then it will better, so it is not
111 because of the Hungarian language at all.

112 J: If you could wake up in the morning, speaking a language perfectly, without having to study for it.
113 You just wake up and all at once you speak this language, which language would this be?

114 T7: Eh, it's a nice question.

115 J: Think about it.

116 T7: Eh maybe, maybe Italian, or maybe something harder. Maybe Chinese I don't; know or eh it
117 would be eh it could be very nice. But German and English are languages what I think I can do learn.

118 J: Ok, but you already speak them.

119 T7: Yes, almost <laughs> but eh maybe, maybe Italian because I love this language so, this is also in
120 my plan that I want to learn but it would be nice when I can do this now.

121 J: Why Italian? Because it sounds nice, but what else is associated for you with Italian?

122 T7: My family, because for example my sister speaks Italian and it always was a very thing to hear her
123 speak with other Italian guys and it was always 'whuuuu I want to do this, also', so it was a great
124 inspiration when I see that how beautiful when she can speak with the people so easily. It was a very
125 nice memory for me. So, maybe because of her and also I love this place. I was there quite a lot of
126 times and I just want to learn the language, because of it's beautiful sound.

127 J: So, well you kind of answered the question already, but unfortunately it does not work that way. Eh,
128 if you had the time and the energy, you would start to learn it?

129 T7: Yeah, yes, definitely I want.

130 J: I totally understand, it's beautiful. Yeah, this is quite an important question and I think it is one of
131 the last questions. So, for a long time, Russian was taught here as a compulsory unit for school, of the
132 curriculum and although it was taught a lot not a lot of people spoke it because they did not really
133 want to speak, Russian did not really have a good feeling so to say, because of obvious reasons. Eh,
134 what do you think of Russian, just when you think about it now?

135 T7: It's very difficult. And yes, maybe it has something, I think the Hungarian people have very
136 negative eh experience in our history. So it can also be an effect in one of your questions, that we
137 don't want to learn new languages, because we have, so eh we have eh such a difficult history with
138 other language or other countries. We have lots of fights and eh, I don't know, maybe I want to learn

- 139 Russian, but maybe it's quite far from me. It's very difficult, but nowadays it's very popular because
140 of my friends want to learn and do this, and yes it's because of the world, not because they want to?
141 J: So it's a useful thing?
- 142 T7: Yes. And, it also has a very nice and beautiful culture so, I think there is nothing wrong with the
143 Russian.
- 144 J: Any clue what your parents would answer to this question?
- 145 T7: Eh, maybe. But, I think eh because my family is a very traditional family and we have strong
146 feelings about our traditions and our history because of for example my mother had to move out back
147 to another country that was also our country, so it's quite difficult. But, eh maybe it has a very
148 negative feelings because of things in my head. So, it's because of my traditions maybe, not because
149 of ehh.
- 150 J: Your heritage?
- 151 T7: Yes, and it's really deep in my head, so it's not a thing that I because of my friends or I don't
152 know because of politicians or things like this that I don't want to learn [Russian], but it's because of
153 thing in my heart or in my head, what I learnt from my childhood.
- 154 J: That's understandable. Eh, but let me see. Ya, what I wonder, the last question. Eh, so, I'm doing
155 this research and I wonder if there is something that you think is particularly interesting, or if there is
156 something I am missing out on. I'm an outsider, so maybe I have the completely wrong perspective. I
157 try to understand something.
- 158 T7: Maybe, I think the most important thing for kids or my friends, or everybody in my age that we
159 have to find someone, or something to inspire* us, because this is the best. When we have good
160 experience with a language or people or a teacher, or I don't know. This is the most important things, I
161 think.
- 162 J: You need to be inspired.
- 163 T7: Yes, and eh lots of time when I learnt with a new teacher, or also in the university, my teacher, my
164 German teacher is very smart and she is quite good at eh German, but she is not as a teacher. So, it is
165 not very useful for us, as I see. It's very nice, and she is speaking very well, but eh but to be a teacher
166 this part I don't think so.
- 167 J: Yes.
- 168 T7: And I think in Hungary I think there are very few good teacher, in language teacher, because eh I
169 don't know why. I think they have to live another and learn another language and this would be a truly
170 inspiration for us. But learning just from books and grammar and just writing lots of tests, is not the
171 reason why I want to learn a language, so.
- 172 J: It doesn't live that way.
- 173 T7: No.
- 174 J: Ok, cool. Thank you <laughs>.

Interview 8 (János)

[Filling in the consent form and reading the information page. Time to ask questions and another oral emphasis on confidentiality and the fact that there are no good or bad answers, that this interview is not a test]

- 1 J: I'd like to know which languages you studied in high school.
2 T8: In high school?
3 J: Or in school, whenever.
4 T8: Russian and English
5 J: Uhu, and was that only in high school, or also in primary school?
6 T8: No, eh Russian in primary school and in the gymnasium both, Russian and English and at
7 university I think only English maybe also Russian, some little Russian.
8 J: Do you still speak Russian?
9 T8: No, just some words.
10 J: Aha.
11 T8: A few sentences eh.
12 J: Did you enjoy studying languages?
13 T8: Eh, not so exciting.
14 J: No, you just did it.
15 T8: I did.
16 J: Ok. And why was it not so exciting?
17 T8: I don't know. Why should it be exciting?
18 J: I don't know, of course. And do remember anything about the teachers you had for Russian or
19 English?
20 T8: Yeah, some of them.
21 J: Were they good teachers, or?
22 T8: We had a very good English teacher in Hungarian, so she gave me a lot.
23 J: Aha, and the Russian teacher?
24 T8: Everybody hated the Russian, because it was a must at that time. What is a must, well (())
25 <laughs>
26 J: Well, that was one of my questions as well that eh of course because of obvious reasons people did
27 not really like to study Russian, because they had to, because it was a compulsory part of the
28 curriculum. What would you say nowadays about Russian, do you still not like it, or that time is over.
29 T8: Concerning Russian language, or what?
30 J: Aha, yes. How do you look at it now?
31 T8: We have no contact to that direction, so I think it is not necessary but when I am working
32 somewhere else and the contact is Russian, then probably it is an advantage.
33 J: Aha.
34 T8: But probably most of them are speaking English, the Russian people but ...
35 J: Do you think it is important to be able to speak a foreign language?
36 T8: Yeah, I think so.
37 J: Why?
38 T8: Because the world is eh global, therefore. Nearly every company has a contact abroad, outside...
39 trading and so on.
40 J: Aha.
41 T8: They eh probably our next generation maybe because of the Internet, the intuition, the contacts
42 and so on.

- 43 J: So, Janko {his son} is also studying language at school eh, what do you think are the most
44 important languages for him?
- 45 T8: For him?
- 46 J: Yes.
- 47 T8: I think English, because the language of Internet is English, but I believe in Europe <laughs>. But
48 I think here German is useful, very useful yah. I hope it will keep and we don't have to learn Arabic or
49 other eh.
- 50 J: Why not? Why do you prefer to keep German language?
- 51 T8: Because when we have to learn Arab, it means that the Arab empire reappeared <laughs>()
52 tragedy! Yah.
- 53 J: Aha. So, there's been a big research here about language proficiency, about who speaks what and it
54 appears that eh a lot of people, a lot less people speak German. Which is interesting, because young
55 people still learn German. Would you have any clue, any suggestion why less people speak German
56 here in Hungary?
- 57 T8: Yes, because even at German companies they have to speak English. Many German companies
58 are also multinational companies, have become multinational companies. For example, our partner in
59 Germany, Steel Case, eh even we are not allowed to eh contact them on email or any other way not in
60 English, because that is the official language of Steel Case. So it's stupid.
- 61 J: That's interesting.
- 62 T8: Because any other colleague of them, a French guy or anybody cannot understand what
63
- 64 <interruption, business phone call>
- 65
- 66 J: Yes, so German. Even in this company it's not.. eh so you have to speak English if you both speak
67 German? Because Tonci {his wife} speaks German really well.
- 68 T8: But even she speaks in English when officially contacting to the to the German colleagues. So, I
69 do not say it is not allowed, but eh we were asked to make all the emails and everything in English.
- 70 J: Yes, it is similar in the University were I go. There English is the language because it is an
71 international university, but even with my tutor who is Dutch I have to speak English. Even when we
72 speak one to one in the same room and no one else is there.
- 73 T8: Yes, and it's a problem, because she {his wife} will forget sooner or later German, forget but
74 coming out from the daily praxis and eh we are communicating in a stupid language, because we are
75 not talking with an English people, we use five hundred words, all together.
- 76 J: It's strange?
- 77 T8: Yes.
- 78 J: Do you know if any eh even within Hungarian companies this is the case? That even within a
79 Hungarian company that has a lot of, I don't know, international contacts people speak English on the
80 work floor?
- 81 T8: I wouldn't say that in a work shop they speak English, but eh I'm sure that in eh Györ in Audi or
82 Mercedes or any other big companies the official language is not the Hungarian.
- 83 J: That's interesting.
- 84 T8: In the Netherlands, and I don't even know when it changed, but in the Netherlands it's just
85 similarly used, but I, I don't know exactly how it works in the Netherlands, it's very interesting.
- 86 J: But just two weeks ago, we were in Kecskemet in the Mercedes factory I don't know whether the
87 workers near the line, who are examining the cars they have also many documents. Probably, that is
88 not in Hungarian. Everything is in German or in English, but not in the, eh in the home language.
89 Because they are probably contact with the German centre, or with the suppliers or anything.
- 90 J: So all this people that work on the line should probably at least either speak English or German.

- 91 T8: Yeah, at least at a base level, they have to.
- 92 J: At least for their profession, they need to. Yeah, so that also bring me to eh, so here in Hungary you
93 need eh if you go to university you need a language certificate.
- 94 T8: Yes
- 95 J: And so I talked to Orsi, who does not really use anything else than Hungarian, but she still needs
96 here German language certificate, which is quite problematic for her, because she doesn't really enjoy
97 learning languages and doesn't really think she needs it, but she still if she wants her diploma, she
98 needs her certificate. What do you think of this rule that people need this extra language to get their
99 diploma?
- 100 T8: In my opinion, that if someone wants to get a diplom* eh this is a, she has to make effort for that
101 and eh to learn a language is probably not so hard because many people without diploma can learn it.
102 Why cannot she?
- 103 J: We're human, we're made to talk <laughs>
- 104 T8: Why is not done, why is it not awaited from a guy who is having a diplom*. Probably the general
105 knowledge, even of her, maybe she is not using it every day, but when she want to be well-informed
106 around the world using the Internet and so on, then she must have it yeah.
- 107 J: So for that same research that they did here in Hungary a lot of people said, an extraordinary
108 amount of people said in Hungary said that they feel discouraged to learn a foreign language because,
109 they say, they are not good at learning languages. Now, it can be that there is a very big proportion in
110 Hungary that is not good at learning languages or there is something else, because I don't think that
111 people.
- 112 T8: I don't understand it.
- 113 J: So, the same research that was done here, found that eh an extraordinary amount of people in
114 Hungary, more than other European countries
- 115 T8: Ya
- 116 J: Say that a reason for them not to learn a language, another language, eh is because they think they
117 are not good at learning languages. Either they're not good at learning languages or there is something
118 else.
- 119 T8: They're lazy.
- 120 J: Could it also be that it is because Hungarian is a very different language, or what do you think?
- 121 T8: No, I didn't say that. I don't think so that the reason is that the Hungarian is so different from the
122 other languages. People are lazy, basically. I am also lazy, so when I am pressed than I do something,
123 but not, than I won't.
- 124 J: <laughs> Well, OK that explains why the language certificate is there.
- 125 T8: Yeah.
- 126 J: That makes sense. So, I have a last question for you, that is about, talking about effort, if you would
127 wake up in the morning and all at once speak a language perfectly without having to put any effort in
128 it. Which language would that be? If you could choose any language.
- 129 T8: Just one?
- 130 J: Just one, unfortunately.
- 131 T8: I like the most the Italian, because it's nice and I like the (()) and so on. But probably <laughs> it
132 wouldn't be useful. German would be eh in my everyday life more useful and even for us and
133 Antonia, who was born near the Austrian border and probably when we get older we will spend more
134 and more time there and eh because of tourists and so on.
- 135 J: Aha, and if you had the time and the possibilities and, well the will as well, to study Italian. Would
136 you at any point consider to learn it just for fun, or that's not for you?
- 137 T8: Well, if not pressed than not <laughs>.

138 J: That's a good answer. I think these were all my questions, but I have one more question just out of
139 curiosity because I am doing this research very nice, as an outsider. Let's say I don't know anything.
140 Is there anything that you find interesting in what we talked about, or anything that I am missing out
141 on, anything that you would add?

142 T8: I need a bottle of wine, and than I can answer this question
143 <laughter>

144 J: Well, you don't have to.

145 T8: Now I cannot reflect on this question.

146 J: If it pops up, please let me know. Thank you.

Interview 9 (Antónia)

[Filling in the consent form and reading the information page. Time to ask questions and another oral emphasis on confidentiality and the fact that there are no good or bad answers, that this interview is not a test]

1 J: So you studied German, English and Russian, do you still speak Russian nowadays?

2 T9: No, no word anymore.

3 J: And when did you start learning German and English?

4 T9: When I was ten, I started with German, or eight... I started with eight German. Then with ten
5 Russian, because it was in the primary school obligatory, and then I started with English only at the
6 university.

7 J: Aha.

8 T9: So in the gymnasium I had German and Russian.

9 J: Ok, and did you enjoy studying these languages?

10 T9: Yes.

11 J: Yes, like do you enjoy studying languages in general, or were there specific languages that you
12 enjoyed most to learn [them]?

13 T9: Well, Russian was very hard, so the grammatic* is very hard. But after German to study English,
14 was pretty easy.

15 J: Very easy.

16 T9: Ok, on this level, because I am not in a very professional level. But on this level English is much
17 more easier than German.

18 J: In school, was there a lot of focus on grammar and rules?

19 T9: Yes, grammar and rules and no speaking.

20 J: Then how did you develop actually the speaking? Because now we can sit and speak.

21 T9: Because in German I had a lot of practice, because we had relatives in Germany and Hungarian
22 parents, but the kids they could not speak anymore Hungarian. So, and I spend a lot of time with them
23 together in summertime, so we had to, we spoke German. That's why I have practice.

24 J: Ok, especially when you're young that's the best way.

25 T9: In the 70's for example eh we lived at the eh close to the Austrian border and it was possible for
26 us to watch the Austrian television, because we were really close to (())

27 J: Oh so you could get the the eh yes.

28 T9: And so, eh it was eh because so eh that first eh could eh practice the language and secondly I got
29 the news of the world because we were living here in the Communism.

30 J: That's true, nice.

31 T9: So, it was important to know the language to get the information.

32 J: But how did that work for English, because you started that in university.

33 T9: Yes.

34 J: And you are completely fine to have a conversation with me now, so when did you get the chance to
35 practice speaking English?

36 T9: That's the problem, that since 2000 when Steel Case took over this German company, we worked
37 with them, and Steel Case said 'from today English is the language for the communication'.

38 J: Ok. So you had to.

39 T9: Yes, that's it. And that's why my German is getting worse and worse, because I don't have the eh
40 absolutely no practice anymore with German.

41 J: Yes, language is like a house: you need to maintain it - absolutely true.

- 42 T9: My German is or was much more better than English, I really could read books, romans {novels};
43 I could make *Kreuzworträtsel* in German, so <shrugs>.
- 44 J: Language attrition.
- 45 T9: Yes, but eh but my English it's like eh, even János said that the problem is that we practice
46 English with people from other countries on the same English level like me. So, and it's <shrugs>
47 J: Yes.
- 48 T9: You know to practice with the French people - English, you first really need to understand which
49 language is he speaking.
- 50 J: <laughs> That's true, that makes it more (()) but you did not take any extra English courses? You
51 just, from the business you had with Steel Case...
- 52 T9: Yes, yes and OK, I started at the university and it was very interesting. There was a friend of me
53 and eh of my friend and he said he needs some extra money and he would like to give us English
54 lessons, and we are interested so two girls and we got a English lesson from a boy for two years and
55 then I was on a level and I was able to take the course on the university for English, and then I was
56 also able at the end of the university to make the exam. After that I just practiced with Steel Case.
- 57 J: When you have to.
- 58 T9: You know and all these stupid trainings in English and all the information; the prices lists so...
59 J: You get used to it anyway.
- 60 T9: Yeah.
- 61 J: Yeah, that makes sense.
- 62 T9: An sometimes I really, if I should explains all these things about Steel Case, for these sales speech
63 in German, I would not be able to do that, because it's <makes a "gone" gesture, laughs>
- 64 J: Yeah, I also find it very hard to. Because I always spoke German with my mom, but German at the
65 moment is really eh somehow German and English in my head do not really go together. If I have to
66 switch between English and German I'm hopelessly lost.
- 67 T9: But your mother's language is German.
- 68 J: Yeah, well my second language is German. I know the basis is there, but because I speak so much
69 English I am hopelessly lost. It's there but just pff eh vaporized.
- 70 T9: That's the same for me and so somehow I am sad because [it's gone]. <laughs> but I push now
71 my son to learn German
- 72 J: So he can practice with you.
- 73 T9: But he really has problems with 'der', 'die', 'das'.
- 74 J: Aha, that's hard.
- 75 T9: Uhu, yeah.
- 76 J: Do you think it's important for Janko to speak German or any other foreign language?
- 77 T9: Well, I would say English is really global and it's a basic thing that you should know nowadays,
78 but if you have plus German or I don't know Spanish or Italian, I would say it is important not only
79 for touristic reason, but eh maybe you could have a job where you need German as a second language
80 for technical things. So, it can help.
- 81 J: Aha. So, if you could eh wake up in morning and eh you would just wake up speaking another
82 language, without any effort, you just speak it perfectly, which language would that be?
- 83 T9: Italian.
- 84 J: Why?
- 85 T9: I like it. I never learnt it, but I like it.
- 86 J: Do you associate it with Italian culture as well?
- 87 T9: Yeah! I like Italian people and the culture, and the country and the food and the drinks, that's
88 why!
- 89 J: If you cut of an Italian's hands he cannot talk anymore.

- 90 T9: <laughs>
- 91 J: Let me see. Yeah, eh so for a long time had a bad name, or it was obligatory here and many people
92 did not feel like studying Russian because they had to, do you have any clue, or what do you think
93 yourself about Russian, about the Russian language?
- 94 T9: Well, I'm eh. Well, I'm sad or I'm sorry that I spend twelve years of my life learning a language,
95 which, really twelve years and I was really good at Russian. So, I was able to speak about any eh
96 topic. Really, about eh oh I don't know.
- 97 J: I now you lost it.
- 98 T9: I lost it totally, and it's you know, twelve years.
- 99 J: It's a long time, a lot of effort as well.
- 100 T9: Yeah, I still can remember my exam at the university; I made this high level Russian exam at
101 university, and I had eh the topic about some economic problems in the Eastern European countries
102 and I was really able to speak!
- 103 J: Wow, amazing.
- 104 T9: Not about weather or <laughs I don't know what, but really about <lifts hands up>
- 105 J: Do you think you could learn it again, that it would be easy for you to pick it up again.
- 106 T9: I don't know, with fifty-one to start again to learn a language.
- 107 J: Well, that's a funny thing, because we always learn that of course it is easier for children, but a lot
108 of new research actually shows that older people are just as eh I works in a very different way eh but
109 older people are just as able to learn another language.
- 110 T9: I don't know, maybe.
- 111 J: There are so many other things in their lives that it is sometimes hard to find time.
- 112 T9: Maybe, when I am seventy and I will be and it will be very boring for me, life, I will eh need some
113 action or activity then I will join a Russian course, maybe.
- 114 J: Ok. Yes, so did you ever have bad experiences learning a language?
- 115 T9: No.
- 116 J: Aha.
- 117 T9: Maybe my first experience was very good and then I was eight and as a small child I had a private
118 teacher and it was an old lady. Really from an old history, and so it was eh she was very important to
119 me and I liked her and how she teach eh, how do you say that, taught me. So, it's a maybe that was the
120 first experience and that's why eh.
- 121 <Interruption>
- 122 J: Eh, I have a last question for you and that is that eh, so apparently a lot of Hungarians think that
123 they're not good at learning languages. Because from this research they pointed out that they, a lot of
124 people don't want to learn language because they are bad at it. I don't think that Hungarians are
125 specifically worse at learning languages than anyone else. Eh do you have an clue why people would
126 say that here?
- 127 T9: eh I don't know. Maybe it's the school. So, it is very important for kids to focus on languages or
128 on one language in the school, because when you are a child it's much more easier* to learn a
129 language than as twenty, forty-five, fifty years old people. So, eh but it depends, you know. It depends
130 on the schools, what is important. The problem I, after eh gymnasium and at the university nowadays
131 it is not possible anymore to learn languages at the universities.
- 132 J: Or you have to pay for it, and it is expensive.
- 133 T9: But, when we were students, languages were in the normal curriculum and you had to make the
134 exams every semesters* or something like that.
- 135 J: You did not only have the opportunity, there was the obligation to learn a language, yes that's true.
- 136 T9: Because after that eh, you know?

- 137 J: Do you think it makes it more difficult for Hungarian people to choose to learn a foreign language,
138 because Hungarian is so different?
139 T9: No, I don't think so.
140 J: It's not a difference.
141 T9: No.
142 J: It's like any other language.
143 T9: Yes.
144 J: What about Chinese, then?
145 T9: There are schools already in Budapest where they have Chinese for children.
146 J: Aha.
147 T9: And for example my friends in New York, they have, the kids already have the Chinese in the
148 school as a third language. So, they have Spanish as a foreign language number one, and number two
149 foreign language is Chinese.
150 J: Wow. <laughs> Well, I think
151 T9: That's it.
152 J: Yes.
153 T9: Ok!
154 J: Thank you.

Interview 10 (Andrea)

[Filling in the consent form and reading the information page. Time to ask questions and another oral emphasis on confidentiality and the fact that there are no good or bad answers, that this interview is not a test]

- 1 J: So you learnt English and Italian?
2 T10: Uhu.
3 J: When did you start this?
4 T10: Eh English I think when I was around eleven, twelve or something, I think when I was in my
5 fifth year when I was in elementary school and Italian was in the eh grammar school from the
6 beginning, so four years.
7 J: Aha. Four years. And do you still speak both of these languages?
8 T10: Unfortunately not. I do not have the chance to practice Italian eh well in the company I have to
9 use English and I have also eh Australian relative eh who I speak English, and eh some French friends
10 as well, and of course some friends from these {?} countries and I can deal with them in eh in English.
11 J: So you speak with Hungarian friends also sometimes in English or?
12 T10: No, no just the foreigners.
13 J: Aha ok, and did you enjoy learning languages?
14 T10: Yes, of course. It is always a fun.
15 J: Yes, why?
16 T10: Eh, because eh I don't know eh because eh I am always curious about eh the system how a
17 language builds up and eh also the similarity between two languages or even more, between my
18 mother tongue, or between the two other I learnt.
19 J: Aha.
20 T10: Or, well, I learnt one month of Finnish. I wouldn't mention it as eh <laughs> as a language
21 lesson, but eh still had a insight of the grammar, of the words; how they eh how they use them; what's
22 the similarity between Finnish and Hungarian. So, yeah I eh I think this is interesting.
23 J: Are there actually a lot of, could you actually find a lot of similarities between Finnish and
24 Hungarian?
25 T10: Just the pronunciation, that's quite similar yeah, and eh there are only two words which are the
26 same.
27 J: Which were?
28 T10: One is 'na', this means 'well' eh 'well tadatadadtadada'. So this is one, and the other one is eh
29 well kind of similar like this. Like eh like it means nothing really.
30 J: In a conversation you use it to kind of stick things together.
31 T10: Yeah, yeah that's the one. And the other word was like the same. So, this was the first and the
32 last word I ever a found which is not a lot <laughs>. And yeah eh the grammar is quite similar to
33 ours, I means we have lots of exceptions and eh they have quite the same systems and eh exceptions
34 to.
35 J: Do they also have a lot of systems with eh, I mean you have a lot of suffixes like 'ból', 'böl', 'ról',
36 'röl' 'ban', 'ben', they have that too, some system like that, or not?
37 T10: As I can remember, yes they have something like that, yes.
38 J: And that was enjoyable to see it, was it enjoyable to study Finnish?
39 T10: Yeah well, yeah it was.
40 J: Of course, Hungarian is very different from English or German or eh.
41 T10: Yeah, definitely.

42 J: Maybe you have some words that are slightly similar to German, because of the Austro-Hungarian
43 time.

44 T10: Yes.

45 J: Like 'polgár' is from 'burger'

46 T10: Yeah, we had some fun with German eh girls to find some words, which are the same.

47 J: 'Vice házmeister'.

48 T10: Yeah. Sálsmínck.

49 J: But besides this, these languages are very different, do you think eh for eh for many Hungarian
50 people it is hard to study anything else than Hungarian, because it is so different?

51 T10: Eh, no. So, ehm I wouldn't say that, because I could see that Finnish people who had the same
52 like twisted grammar and words, they were fine with learning different languages.

53 J: They're perfect in English.

54 T10: Yes, you know why. Because they just don't translate their cartoons, I mean from the age of six
55 or seven they just stop it, and they say that well 'read that and if you can't then learn the English'.

56 They know a bit about a lot of European languages so they can dig out the meaning of eh longer eh
57 text from even Dutch or German or whatever, because they can hear it from the films and they are
58 familiar with some words and that's enough for them. So, and if they can do that, than we can do that,
59 it's just that our teaching system is eh it's eh I guess it differs from the optimal or I don't know. I think
60 that is the problem. I mean we shouldn't really start it from eh from the grammar part but to be able to
61 use it or to be, to dare to speak.

62 J: You think it is a big problem, that they're shy?

63 T10: Yes, because they always learn that 'Oh no I can't say a word because probably it won't be
64 perfect', but actually no one cares about the, eh perfect eh sentences, but rather what you want to say
65 really. I mean there is a Spanish person, who don't* really cares about what eh what he actually says,
66 but you know they just radical and people just understand him.

67 J: Is there pressure, from your experience on being able to speak perfectly?

68 T10: Yeah, and also eh the system as well and the examination. How we have to eh write the test, how
69 we get the grades, how we have to take the grammar test or even how eh language sounds. I think eh
70 the, yeah the orally the eh ..

71 J: The oral exams?

72 T10: Yeah, eh some of us. So that's the other thing, just people just don't like to eh say things.

73 Because, eh 'oh my god it won't be perfect' and it's not good then.

74 J: That's makes it much harder, definitely. Do you think it's very important for everyone to speak
75 another language besides Hungarian?

76 T10: Probably it helps, but for eh a carpenter I don't know why it is really necessary. It can be handy
77 though, I guess, but and also I think it helps to make things in the brain but eh- I'm not a biologist so I
78 don't know - but apart for that well, eh simple people I guess they don't need it.

79 J: And what for you, what about you yourself? Is it important for you as a person to speak another
80 language?

81 T10: Yeah, I enjoy it first, and I have to work with it and then so yeah I have a lot of reasons.

82 J: If you could wake up in the morning and speak a language perfectly, just without, just eh wake up
83 and you speak these language as if you have never done anything else, which language would that be?

84 T10: Eh. <long silence> Good question.

85 J: Take your time. If you really cannot choose, then tell me which two languages.

86 T10: Oh maybe English or Spanish, I guess because then eh a lot of other languages can be familiar,
87 because there are many which are close to that. So yeah, German or Italian, or Portugese. So, probably
88 I would enjoy understanding a lot of other languages, so that's why as well. I mean I could really

- 89 imagine how eh how we could feel at eh an Italian person knows a language and probably he is too
90 lazy to learn another one but he understands Spanish people...
- 91 J: French people.
- 92 T10: Yeah. So, it could be strange.
- 93 J: So, it doesn't work that way. You will not wake up, speaking another language. So, if you had the
94 time and the opportunity to study another language would you start studying either Spanish or eh or
95 would you improve it {English} actually?
- 96 T10: Eh I would improve Italian I think, because I really like that language. I mean I think is much
97 nicer eh I like it somehow more than the eh Spanish eh, and then I love to understand eh the Brazillian
98 Portugese, eh I don't know it sounds so weird and it's like eh I nearly understand it, but still I don't.
99 Because it also comes from the same branches as Italian, but it sounds like yeah I don't know.
- 100 J: But very different anyway.
- 101 T10: And also maybe, maybe the Russian on the list. I am not sure there, but maybe it is also fun to
102 understand that. I mean, I don't know. My parents had to learn it and it wasn't fun for them, but
103 maybe for me – I don't know.
- 104 J: You'd be interested.
- 105 T10: Yeah.
- 106 J: Do you think that now still a lot of people look at Russian as something dark from the past, or not so
107 much: people got over it?
- 108 T10: I guess it differentiates, there are people who know the eh this country has eh still has a big effect
109 on eh Europe eh or on the countries around and then they say 'all right, let's start to learn a bit about
110 Russian culture and language', but yeah there are also the other side that 'OK that was the part of
111 Soviet Union, this is heritage that I don't want to remember it's language and more'. Yeah, I guess its
112 two sides of the coin. And both exist, I guess.
- 113 J: Do you think that it's both side of the coin can be mainly represented by mainly the younger and the
114 older people? Or also among younger people it's very different?
- 115 T10: Eh, maybe the second one. I really know some people, well not the regular eh eye sight, so they
116 still differently about this Soviet thing, even though they are in my age.
- 117 J: Ok, well of course, it survives. Maybe it depends on how your parents have experienced it. Let me
118 see, I've got some interesting answers from you already <laughs>. Yes, so eh I was talking about this
119 research before, that a lot of people see ot as a thing that there are not good at learning languages. In
120 the same research eh people had to cross advantages of learning languages of learning a foreign
121 language, and eh Hungary stood out comparing to all other European countries by saying that most
122 Hungarian people see working abroad as an advantage. Much more than people from other countries
123 would list it as an advantage. But the funny thing is, is that they had the lowest score listing meeting
124 new people as an advantage of learning. A rally funny contrast if you look at it eh of course these
125 numbers eh can exist this way because of many different reasons, but just on paper it looks very
126 interesting: "we really want to work abroad, but we don't really think it is an advantage to meet new
127 people – so that's interesting. Anyway, what do you think? Is eh is eh would you agree that working
128 abroad is a bigger advantage of learning foreign language than being able to meet new people, or is it
129 on the same level?
- 130 T10: It's eh it's complicated, because eh probably I enjoyed most about eh staying abroad is eh it was
131 that eh I could meet new friends, and I could make new relationships. I enjoy that so much yeah, but
132 there is also eh if someone want to work abroad well go ahead. But I really can hear that some of these
133 people who go abroad they go they don't really want to know their colleagues or the surroundings
134 where they live. They really want eh money and then go home and buy their house or whatever.
- 135 J: Aha.

- 136 T10: But I think for me the most advantage was to eh really eh to meet new people, so for me that was
137 the best thing. But then when I came home, I realized that I could make new friend here too, and I
138 enjoy that here too. I didn't have to be at eh
139 J: you don't have to go abroad to meet new people.
- 140 T10: yes, or to talk in a different language or anything, but eh don't know people I think it's just it
141 don't come to smile and eh just stay at home. I mean, I can even smile to the bus driver and he will ask
142 if I am I don't know from somewhere from the country side and eh then I say 'no I am from the heart
143 of the city' and this not you're smiling. Yeah, I'm in a good mood, sorry! And you said a joke and I
144 am laughing.
- 145 J: I also think that this question, meeting new people is a very ambiguous question. Because people
146 can eh interpret it as meeting new people or meeting people from eh other countries. So meeting new
147 people, yeah you can do that here, but you can do that abroad. Meeting new people from other
148 countries is probably easier in another country.
- 149 T10: Yeah, well yeah.
- 150 J: So, this question's advantage I think, the way they listed it: people can read it in very different
151 ways. That's why they got such a strange eh it's just this huge European report and it's just eh these
152 "facts" are just listed next to each other and it gives a very strange image of what eh because you may
153 think – oh these Hungarians, they like to go abroad but they don't like to meet new people, which is of
154 course nonsense or at least it does not work that way. Anyway, let me see. Did I ask eh, did you ever
155 have bad experiences learning languages?
- 156 T10: No, you did not ask me. Eh, bad experience, what can it be?
- 157 J: Bad teacher, something that made you more afraid to learn how to speak eh.
- 158 T10: Well I did not have very bad, eh good experience about eh learning English, for example.
159 Because eh, in grammar school eh I get to the better group - I guess that was the worst and eh it really
160 made me complexes or I don't know. I also did not dare to eh to talk eh even though I went to a debate
161 course, so I really had to make good arguments and everything, but the eh when I got to abroad that
162 was the point when I eh had the chance to really improve my English, because then I had to talk and I
163 did not have time to rethink the sentences or probably they were wrong. I realized that "actually no
164 one cares' about it and shouldn't do that too and then just be happy and talk and talk and talk and then
165 things will come, grammar will come, words will come and yeah the whole thing will improve.
- 166 J: Yeah, you have to get over the threshold.
- 167 T10: Yeah, so I think that was the worst, but yeah it was in the past so it's eh.
- 168 J: So, now it's easy I mean now you eh we speak and you don't seem to have any problems.
- 169 T10: No, it's all right.
- 170 J: Ok, that's good. Eh I think I don't have any other questions. Maybe if you, maybe you have
171 anything to add or to say well this is maybe interesting to your research or if you have any additions
172 for me.
- 173 T10: I don't know, I don't think so. Yeah, I think we just got around.
- 174 J: Ok, thank you so much for your input. Makes me really happy.
- 175 T10: Ok, you're welcome.

