

Tanulmány

Emily C. Blair, Vanessa DeWilde & Marjolijn Verspoor **Investigation of Beliefs Towards Foreign Language Learning in Southwest Hungary**

Abstract

Trends in language learning have changed across Hungary with increasing numbers of families opting for their children to learn English rather than German. The aim of this study was to analyze the beliefs of parents about their children's foreign language learning in the Hungarian context. This study was conducted as part of a larger project into young learners' exposure to English in Southwestern Hungary. Questionnaires were given to the parents of 47 students between the ages of 10–12 years old. One target group of participants were students studying in a bilingual English program, while the other was a group of students studying German. Thematic analysis showed that parents of the bilingual English students highlighted the usefulness of English as a World language and communication with family as being factors in why they chose an English study program. Parents of students studying German also mentioned usefulness and family communication as determining factors, but further mentioned geographical location as being key to their decision. Fisher's exact tests show that there were significant differences between the two groups' mention of usefulness of the language ($p=.001$) and geographical location ($p=.008$). Both groups mentioned family communication at similar rates ($p=.562$).

Keywords: language beliefs, questionnaire, young learners, parents

Introduction

In Southwestern Hungary, close to the Austrian border, one might expect German to reign supreme as the most popular second language. Despite the geographical location, English has been the most popular foreign language in the region for years. Many students will eventually go on to learn both languages, but it is interesting to examine the initial choice in their language learning journey. Parents consider many factors when making the decision of which language their children should study in primary school. By considering these factors, more informed educational policy decisions can be made. This article takes a look at a small-scale study conducted in the region, focused on the parents of primary school-aged children studying English and German.

To fully understand the dynamics of language choice in this region, it is essential to examine the historical context in Hungary. Hungarians have had a complex relationship with foreign language learning due to distinct changes in their government and global status. Between 1945 and 1989 due to the Soviet Union's occupation of Hungary, learning Russian was mandatory and other languages were restricted. This restriction led not only to a shortage of qualified

language teachers, but also to a hunger for learning new languages after the Soviets' departure (Kontra & Bartha 2010: 69).

Starting in the 1990s when language choice became an option in Hungary, Russian, German and English were the most studied languages (Kontra & Bartha 2010: 66). In the late 1990s, as qualified German and English teachers became more readily available, the popularity of Russian faded dramatically. By the year 2000, English had overcome German as the most studied language (Kontra & Bartha 2010: 66). Another monumental event was the acceptance of Hungary into the European Union in 2004, which could also have affected attitudes towards foreign language learning. Just prior to this event, Fodor and Peluau (2003) estimated that there were 500,000 learners of English and German, respectively. Throughout the 2000s, English has become increasingly popular, while the interest in learning German has continued to fall. Figure 1 shows the number of students learning foreign languages in Hungary between 2010–2024. Note that students are counted for each language that they are learning, so these numbers do not correspond to total numbers of students. Figure 1 shows that English increases in popularity as German becomes less popular, but Spanish also increases its popularity during these years.

School year	English	German	French	Italian	Spanish	Latin	Russian	Other
2010/2011	359,032	157,365	2,344	589	422	10	828	3,804
2011/2012	373,124	153,844	2,222	613	451	85	658	3,230
2012/2013	403,053	144,717	2,468	564	486	57	602	3,085
2013/2014	407,521	140,511	2,345	556	575	60	690	2,607
2014/2015	410,011	136,570	2,349	469	573	54	751	3,466
2015/2016	415,293	137,895	2,253	452	534	79	730	3,355
2016/2017	419,808	135,339	2,246	487	919	85	664	3,148
2017/2018	428,938	131,735	2,272	507	891	112	572	3,378
2018/2019	433,447	125,671	1,998	608	1,046	90	553	3,220
2019/2020	438,806	124,282	2,308	561	1,158	80	554	3,350
2020/2021	440,514	117,542	1,586	541	1,191	82	483	3,367
2021/2022	437,695	106,074	1,839	570	1,372	77	478	3,591
2022/2023	434,784	98,464	1,501	519	1,300	58	524	2,842
2023/2024	437,622	92,875	1,567	417	1,211	60	374	3,149

Figure 1. Students learning foreign languages in primary schools.
 Note. Source: Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Culture and Innovation. In the public domain.

The rise of popularity of English learning can easily be explained by its omnipresence as a world language. Nonetheless, the decrease in interest in German is intriguing given Hungary's close connections to Austria. German functions as a lingua franca in this region, particularly in Southwest Hungary which shares a border with Austria. As of December 2024, the Austrian social insurance agency reported that 127,209 Hungarians were full-time registered employees in Austria (Beschäftigte in Österreich, 2025). In Southwest Hungary, it becomes even more relevant as many people in this area live in Hungary but commute to work in Austria. The two cities within the study, Zalaegerszeg and Zalalövő, are both situated in Zala County within 200 kilometers of the Austrian border.

This unique context forms the basis for the present study, which allows us a window into the language beliefs of families in Southwestern Hungary. Based on the results of questionnaires from parents in the region, this study investigates their attitudes towards language learning and shines a light on the deeper motivations behind language learning in this area. The findings of the study not only provide insight into local attitudes in Southwest Hungary but also contribute

to broader discussions on language education policy in Europe. In particular, they highlight how parental perceptions of a language can greatly impact a child's foreign language learning. Taking all of this into account, the research question for the present study was "What factors affect parents' choice of English or German language program?"

Literature Review

Many parents struggle over the decision of which language their child should learn. The importance of this decision and the role of parents are crucial in determining the child's success and motivation for learning a foreign language. Gardner (1985) argued that parents may play both an active and passive role in their child's language learning journey. These roles can manifest in different ways but undoubtedly affect the child's attitude and success.

The active role refers to the ways parents support, encourage, and monitor their children's learning, and this parental involvement can increase motivation in young learners (Nie & Mavrou 2025). Examples of this would be enrolling the child in language courses, purchasing resources for them to learn the language or even studying with the child. Active parents may create an immersive language environment at home or seek opportunities for their child to interact with native speakers of the language.

Even when parents are not actively helping the child to learn a language, the passive role still affects the child. The passive role refers to the beliefs that parents hold regarding the language or language community (Gardner 1985), and this "emotional companionship" can impact language learning (Cheng & Zhou 2023). Examples of this may be the concept of language prestige or cultural value. Parents may view English as a gateway to the world, while German may serve as a more practical tool in everyday life. These beliefs and attitudes may be consciously and directly communicated to the child or may be subconsciously felt. Parents may passively thwart language learning by not encouraging the child to attend programs or by sharing negative opinions that filter down to the child.

Both active and passive behaviors may function independently or work in conjunction. For example, parents' feelings towards a specific "language community" may impact their active role, such as which programs they choose to have their children participate in. These interactions can occur in both positive and negative ways (Gardner 1985). In a positive sense, parents might encourage the child to study more and emphasize the opportunities and benefits of studying a second language, especially when the L1 is not widely spoken across the world (Csizér & Kormos 2009). In a negative situation, parents may consciously or subconsciously communicate to their children that the second language is not important or a waste of time. These factors can not only affect which program a student is enrolled in, but may also manifest later into better motivation while learning or even a higher proficiency level (Gardner 1985).

Since the role of the parent's opinions is clearly important, it is interesting to consider why these feelings towards certain languages develop. The Contact Hypothesis states that positive interactions between members of different groups can lead to less prejudice and positive feelings. This Contact Hypothesis has been observed within Hungary. Dörnyei and Csizér (2005) found that within Hungary there was a positive correlation between contact with German speaking tourists and attitudinal and motivational measures. Notably, there was a certain point at which these correlations became negative, with the highest contact groups forming negative opinions of the German speaking tourists (Dörnyei & Csizér 2005).

Using the metaphor of the spread of fast food, the authors pointed out that metropolitan areas may have become tired of the vast numbers of tourists and begun to see the negative sides of the situation, while those in more rural areas may still see the novelty in encountering foreigners (Dörnyei & Csizér 2005). Despite the proximity to the border of Austria, it is reasonable to assume that in a largely rural area such as Southwestern Hungary, the opportunity to interact with German speakers would still be somewhat of a novelty and provide people with the positive sides of the Contact Hypothesis.

While contact with German tourists or with locals while traveling in Austria may be more likely due to the geographical proximity, it is interesting to consider that Hungarians in this region may be more exposed to English via online interaction. In a modern world, one cannot ignore the vast amount of experiences and interactions people are having via social media, YouTube and other online sources.

Various studies have examined whether online or face-to-face contact were more impactful. Bond et al. (2023) found that face-to-face positive interaction was the most influential in shaping intergroup prejudices. This means that the novelty of interacting with German speakers in real life may be more impactful for residents of this region. It was also shown that negative online interaction may have a stronger impact than negative face-to-face interaction (Bond et al. 2023). With widespread access to English speaking social media, films, and videos, there is a greater risk of negative perceptions being formed. Other studies, such as McCormick et al. (2024) argue that a mixture of face-to-face and online interaction can work to encourage positive feelings between groups. In this way, it is possible that Hungarians in the given context are developing positive feelings towards both German- and English-speaking groups.

Parental opinions may be shaped by a variety of factors, but the significance of their role is clear. Parents in Southwest Hungary must guide their children towards German or English since primary schools offer only these choices. This decision requires parents to weigh the benefits of each language and to plan for their child's future education. These decisions are not made in isolation but instead are influenced by a complex set of factors involving both cultural and socio-economic factors that will be discussed in detail. Some parents may have subconscious beliefs surrounding the languages or may have had negative interactions that sway their choices (Gardner 1985). Others may focus on the perceived benefits of learning the language such as prestige or future job opportunities (Csizér & Kormos 2009). To better understand how these factors are affecting children in Southwest Hungary, the present study investigates the language choices and beliefs of parents in the region.

As mentioned previously, language learning has changed significantly in Hungary since the fall of the Soviet Union. Southwest Hungary has not been immune to the growing popularity of English. In fact, some local schools struggle to find enough students to keep German teachers fully employed. Because of these issues, some schools have changed their curriculums so that students learn English and German on an alternating basis, either by semester or year, or simultaneously. This may solve the problem at the surface level, but it is interesting to examine why this shift is occurring and to gather information about the reasoning behind parent's choices for their children.

Previous research into language learning, exposure and beliefs has focused on older students, such as Fajt (2024) and Dörnyei et al. (2006). For this reason, the current study seeks to look more in depth at younger students in an attempt to learn how their education journey begins. This early influence may shape the long-term proficiency and attitude towards language learning. Furthermore, this study focuses on the decision-making process of parents which

offers a more comprehensive understanding of the trajectory of these students' language learning.

Gathering information about why parents are choosing English more and more is not only relevant for schools, but also for parents themselves. The increasing preference for English in this region is likely influenced by the use of English within the European Union, economic factors, and the dominance of English in the media. Nonetheless, studies have shown that learning German as an L2 and English as an L3 offers advantages for Hungarian students (Szabó & Jessner 2024). Szabó and Jessner (2024) investigated 7th and 8th graders studying German and English. Two groups were assembled: one with L2 German and L3 English and one with L2 English and L3 German. Students were asked to complete a C-Test and multilingual competency test (MCT) to test their knowledge of their L3. Ultimately, they found that students learning German as their L2 outperformed those learning English as an L2. Other studies also back the relevance of this claim (Berkes & Flynn 2012; Penner 2017).

This order of languages should absolutely be considered as parents make choices for their children to study languages. Understanding the beliefs and motivations of parents could be used in conjunction with this information to help guide families' decision-making regarding language learning for their children. By extension, this could lead to better outcomes for young learners in this region.

The Study

Context

The present study was part of a larger research project into exposure to English and English proficiency in this region. It focused on students ages 10–12 years old who were still attending primary school. This is relevant to note given that within Hungary, some students enter into secondary education in 5th grade, which can create a problem when interpreting or comparing research that refers to primary or secondary education within Hungary (Kontra & Bartha 2010). Secondary schools tend to offer more language choices, so it is also worth noting that at all the primary schools surveyed, German and English were the only foreign language options offered. Within the larger study, two main groups were compared: Bilingual English students and German as a Foreign Language students. These groups were selected in order to examine the differences in formal and informal learning.

Participants

The parents of two different groups of students participated in this study. The details of each group can be seen in Figure 2. The first group of students were enrolled in a Bilingual English primary school. There were 22 students who had studied English from first grade onward. Students were 5th graders, 10 girls and 12 boys, all between the ages of 10 and 12. The second group of students were from two schools which had studied German from 4th grade. None of the students had studied English formally. Students were 5th graders, 15 girls and 10 boys, all between the ages of 10–12. The Bilingual English school serves a mostly urban population while the German as a Foreign Language schools serves a semi-rural community and an urban population.

Emily C. Blair, Vanessa DeWilde & Marjolijn Verspoor:
Investigation of Attitudes Towards Foreign Language Learning in Southwest Hungary
Argumentum 21 (2025), 201–213
Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó
DOI: 10.34103/ARGUMENTUM/2025/12

Group	School Type	Grade/Age	Sample Size	Gender	L1	Foreign Languages
Bilingual English	Public Primary School	5 th (10–12 years old)	22	10 girls 12 boys	Hungarian	English
German as a Foreign Language	2 Public Primary Schools	5 th (10–12 years old)	25	15 girls 10 boys	Hungarian	German

Figure 2. Details of the Groups

Before the experiment began, the researcher obtained permission from the education office for both cities (Tankerület) and the permission from the headmasters of the schools. In line with ethical research standards, parents were also given a consent form that informed them of how their data would be used and allowed them to opt-out of participation, if desired. Students were also asked to sign the consent form to indicate their willingness to participate. Additionally, parents were provided with the researcher's contact information so they could ask questions, ensuring fully informed consent.

Instrument and Methodology

The findings of this study are based on the qualitative data of a questionnaire. The parents were given a paper-based questionnaire to gather data about their children's habits and why they chose their child's current language program. This was nearly identical to the questionnaire used in DeWilde et al. (2020) (See Appendix A). The questionnaires gathered quantitative data about the amount of time children were exposed to English, and asked open-ended questions about the importance of English, how the kids used English, and what factors influenced the parents' language choice for their children. In addition, three open-ended questions were added about language choice (German or English) to allow parents to elaborate on their answers.

The researcher translated the responses into English. Then, the answers were grouped according to recurring themes. Thematic analysis was defined by Braun and Clarke (2006: 79) as “a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data”. This method was chosen as it allowed the researcher to “reduce voluminous data into clearly articulated thematic statements” and was conducted in reference to the steps described by Lochmiller (2021: 2042). Conducting a thematic analysis involved identifying a clear research question which was “What factors affect parents' choice of language program?”. After gathering the data from the questionnaires, the researcher did a first coding, which identified all of the themes present. A second round of coding grouped the ideas into categories so that broader themes could be evaluated and compared.

After the thematic analysis was complete, the researcher conducted a Fisher's Exact Test. Fisher's Exact Test is a nonparametric test for categorical variables. It was selected to examine the frequency in which the themes were mentioned in each sub-group.

Results

The result of the thematic analysis showed that parents in both groups placed an importance on family communication and the usefulness of world languages for travel, work and study. The parents in the German study group also mentioned geographical location as being relevant to their decision. A few parents also mentioned other themes such as interest in music, but these themes were excluded from the final analysis due to the lack of prevalence in both groups.

Thematic Analysis of the Bilingual English Group

In the Bilingual English group 22 parental surveys were collected. 19 parents from the English study group gave statements that were grouped into “usefulness of world languages”. One parent said “*English is accepted as the most common language in the world.*” (parent 1). Parents mentioned the importance of knowing English for future opportunities saying, “*It is a must for work.*” (parent 5) and “*It is necessary for continued education.*” (parent 22). Travel abroad was also mentioned as an important need for English. One parent said “*When travelling abroad, the child can express themselves properly.*” (parent 18). Another parent stated that “*He could meet lots of foreigners.*” (parent 5). These statements all support the understanding that parents choose English because of its dominance across the world. Most parents expressed how English could benefit their children in a variety of spaces from work to education to social needs. Nearly all of the parents expressed that their children viewed English positively and wanted to learn English.

Another theme emerged within this group, which was the effect of other family members' knowledge of English. Two parents mentioned that other members of the family had studied English and that this had influenced their decision. One parent said, “*Her big sister also studied English.*” (parent 1). Another parent described how her family communicates in English at home, “*Our children have spoken English with their father since birth.*” (parent 13). Although this theme was not mentioned as frequently as the usefulness of English, it is understandable that parents may choose a language based on their own knowledge or the knowledge of a sibling. Notably, no parents expressed any difficulty in learning English, which shows a belief that English is accessible regardless of linguistic background.

Thematic Analysis of the German Group

The German group included 25 parental surveys. This group also highlighted the role of global languages with 10 respondents making statements about the importance and usefulness of knowing world languages. Interestingly, many parents acknowledged the role of both English and German as being important. One respondent said about English that, “*the child can more confidently navigate the world.*” (parent 40). Notably, 5 respondents made it clear that their children would learn German first and then English due to the difficulty of learning German, which showed an awareness of the role of English on a global scale. An informal interview with the teacher of this group revealed that the school encourages parents to select German first because of this. Interestingly, several parents noted that their child would have preferred to study English, which further highlights the influence of the parent's attitude on selecting a language program. Moreover, it underscores that practical considerations may be prioritized over personal preferences, despite going against global trends.

Similar to the bilingual English group, the theme of family communication was mentioned. 3 parents responded that someone in the family spoke German and that that was an influential factor in their child studying German. One parent said, “*More family members speak German.*” (parent 32) and another said that, “*their father uses German on a daily basis.*” (parent 44). It is evident that some parents tend to choose languages that they or their families feel comfortable with.

One unique theme from this group was the mention of geographical location as a determining factor for which language their child studied. Seven parents stated that their proximity to the Austrian border made them choose German for their child. One stated, “*In our area, everyone speaks German.*” (parent 29). Others said, “*because we are close to the border*” (parent 47) and “*Their father works in Austria and we are close to the border.*” (parent 26). Another survey mentioned frequently going on holiday in Austria. These results were to be expected since the participants all lived near the Austrian border, so logically the German studying group would mention geographical factors more frequently than the bilingual English group. It is clear that the economic and social benefits of speaking German strongly influenced the parents in this group.

Similarities and differences between parents in the English and German groups

The Fisher’s exact test showed that mentions of family communication were not significantly different ($p=.562$). This means that both groups mentioned similarly that their children were attending the language program because others in the family had studied that language. Between the two groups, only 2 parents in the bilingual English group and 3 parents in the German group mentioned this, so despite the similarity in frequency it did not seem like a serious motivation for either group. Instead, external factors such as career and travel advantages and geographical location seem to play a more influential role.

The Fisher’s Exact Test showed a significant difference between mentions of the usefulness of knowing a world language ($p=.001$). In the English group, the majority of parents mentioned the prominence of English as a world language as a driving force behind why they chose the English program while less than half mentioned this in the German group. This shows that while both German and English are viewed as important, English is more associated with global communication and opportunities, whereas German is chosen for more practical reasons. In keeping with this finding, a significant difference ($p=.008$) was shown between the two groups’ mentions of geographical location. This was evident since none of the English groups’ parents mentioned geographical location in their surveys.

Discussion

In the region of Southwest Hungary, language attitudes are a complex and nuanced topic. The role of parents in selecting and promoting a certain language for their children cannot be underestimated. In order for schools, educators, and parents to make informed decisions, it is important to understand the opinions and viewpoints. The current study has presented the qualitative data from a questionnaire and gathered information about how parents in this region view German and English with respect to their children’s education.

Results show that two common themes emerged in both groups. Parents noted family communication and the usefulness of knowing certain languages as being driving factors in their decision making. These themes are indicative of the types of beliefs that shape parents' decision-making. The passive role of parents as described by Gardner (1985) involves belief systems and attitudes towards languages. The beliefs parents mentioned clearly influenced what program the children were placed into. One such example is that some parents noted that their child would have preferred to study English, but was placed into the German program instead. This illustrates the role of the parent's views and how their active participation shapes the child's life. Parents value what languages others in the family speak and may gravitate towards languages that other siblings or parents have studied. This shows how the passive role of the parent and their attitude toward the language can manifest in their decisions. The usefulness of world languages and opportunities for future study and work are another important consideration for parents. In this respect, the parents' long-term planning was clear, and it showed an active influence from the parents to direct their children towards the option that the parents perceive as more beneficial for the child in the future.

Another theme that was evident in the German study group was geographical context. This turned out to play a very important role as many parents view German as an asset in their region. For the German group, it was found that parents viewed the ability to interact and communicate with German speaking people as an asset, which corresponds with the findings of Dörnyei and Csizér (2005) in other less urban areas of Hungary. Thus, results also point to the relevance of the Contact hypothesis in this region (Dörnyei & Csizér 2005) and support previous studies that found face to face interaction was integral in developing positive feelings and reducing prejudice (Bond et al. 2023). In regard to the findings from the English group, it is noted that while there may be more opportunities for negative interaction online, the group still felt overwhelmingly positive towards English. As McCormick (2024) suggested, it is possible that the combination of online interaction with English combined with limited in-person interaction was sufficient to leave lasting positive impressions on the participants of this group.

Conclusion

These attitudes are the key to understanding why families are selecting English as the preferred language for their children. Statistical tests showed that both groups mentioned family communication at similar rates and said that a sibling or parent's knowledge of the language influenced which language they choose for their child. The bilingual English group's parents overwhelmingly mentioned the importance of English as a world language, while the German group placed more importance on geographical location. These findings highlight that parents are strategic in selecting language programs and weigh the long-term benefits of each language for their children. Some parents may prioritize global mobility in English while others may favor the regional opportunities that come from speaking German.

Some limitations exist in the current study, namely the sample size and use of convenience sampling. Some parents did not answer the language choice questions in depth or at all which further limited the sampling. More extensive research with personal interviews or larger sample size would allow a more in-depth analysis of families' attitudes in this region. It may also be beneficial to select schools from across the region to get a more representative sample.

Additionally, adding a third group of students who study in non-Bilingual English programs would offer another perspective that was not represented in this study.

Local schools can utilize this information gained from this study to better tailor their curriculums to families' needs, and to help guide decision making in regard to marketing different language programs to parents. Many parents in this group expressed that learning German first is easier which has been supported by previous research (Szabó 2024). Nonetheless English programs in primary schools continue to increase in popularity. Parental perceptions are integral to the support and motivation of children studying foreign languages, so this role should not be ignored. This study can contribute to informing parents, teachers, and administrators and may ultimately lead to better language learning outcomes for the students of this region.

References

- Berkes, E. & Flynn, S. (2012): Enhanced L3...Ln Acquisition and its Implications for Language Teaching. In: Gabrys-Barker, D. (ed.): *Cross-linguistic Influences in Multilingual Language Acquisition*. Heidelberg: Springer, 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-29557-7_1
- Beschäftigte in Österreich. (2025, January 20). Retrieved January 29, 2025, from <https://www.sozialversicherung.at/cdscontent/?contentid=10007.894921&portal=svportal>.
- Bond J., Dixon J., Tredoux C. & Andreouli E. (2023): The contact hypothesis and the virtual revolution: Does face-to-face interaction remain central to improving intergroup relations? *PLoS One*. 2023 Dec 8;18(12):e0292831. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0292831>
- Cheng, X. & Zhou, S. (2023): The influence mechanism of parental emotional companionship on children's second language acquisition. *Frontiers in Psychology* 13. <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1034867/full>. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1034867>
- Csizér, K. & Kormos, J. (2009): Learning experiences, selves and motivated learning behaviour: A comparative analysis of structural models for Hungarian secondary and university learners of English. In: Dörnyei, Z. et al. (ed.): *Motivation, language identity and the L2 Self*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 66–97. <https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.30945943.8>
- De Wilde, V., Brysbaert, M. & Eyckmans, J. (2020): Learning English through out-of-school exposure. Which levels of language proficiency are attained and which types of input are important? *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* 23(1), 171–185. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1366728918001062>
- Dörnyei, Z. & Csizér, K. (2005): The Effects of Intercultural Contact and Tourism on Language Attitudes and Language Learning Motivation. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 24, 327–357. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X05281424>
- Dörnyei, Z., Csizér, K. & Németh, N. (2006): *Motivation, language attitudes and globalisation: A Hungarian Perspective*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781853598876>
- Fajt, B. (2024): *Extramural English activities and individual learner differences: A case of Hungary*. Budapest & Paris: Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary | Éditions L'Harmattan. <https://doi.org/10.56037/978-2-336-40513-1>

- Fodor, F. & Peluau, S. (2003) Language geostrategy in eastern and central Europe: Assessment and perspectives. In: Maurais, J. & Morris, M.A. (eds.): *Languages in a Globalising World* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 85–98.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511613739.007>
- Hungarian Central Statistical Office (2025). https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/okt/en/okt0009.html
- Kontra, E. & Bartha, C. (2010): Foreign language education in Hungary: Concerns and controversies. *Sociolinguistica* 24(1), 61–84. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110223323.61>
- Lochmiller, C. R. (2021): Conducting thematic analysis with qualitative data. *The qualitative report* 26(6), 2029–2044. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2021.5008>
- McCormick, B., Austin, R., Turner, R. N., Hoter, E. & Shonfeld, M. (2024): Blended Learning and the Contact Hypothesis: Insights from Israel and Northern Ireland. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education* 32(3), 347–382. Article 382. Advance online publication. <https://www.learntechlib.org/primary/p/224376/>,
<https://doi.org/10.70725/620490lrjrlk>
- Nie, D. & Mavrou, I. (2025): Parents' views on Chinese young learners' foreign language learning attitudes and motivation: A mixed methods study. *Language Teaching* 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444824000326>
- Penner, O. (2017): Nyelvi interakciók megjelenése egy idegen nyelvi tanítási gyakorlaton. *Modern Nyelvoktatás* 23(4), 68–84.
- Szabó, N. & Jessner, U. (2024): Multilingual Assessment of Primary School Pupils in the Hungarian Context. *Acta Academiae Beregsasiensis Philologica* 3, 101–129. <https://doi.org/10.58423/2786-6726/2024-1-101-12>

Emily C. Blair 
 PhD Student
 University of Pannonia
 8200 Veszprém
 Wartha Vince Street 1
 emilycilliler@gmail.com

Prof. Dr. Vanessa De Wilde 
 Assistant professor
 Department of Translation, Interpreting and Communication
 Ghent University
 Groot-Brittanniëlaan 45, 9000 Gent
 vanessa.dewilde@ugent.be

Prof. Dr. Marjolijn Verspoor 
 Doctoral School of Multilingualism
 University of Pannonia
 8200 Veszprém
 Wartha Vince Street 1
 m.h.verspoor@rug.nl

Appendix A

Questionnaire for Parents

Your Child's Information:

School: _____

Class : _____

Name : _____

Date of birth : _____

How much contact does your child have with the English language?

1. Tick the box. How many hours/minutes does your child do the activities in the list **per day**:

In ENGLISH	She/He doesn't do this.	Less than 30 minutes	30 minutes – 1 hour	1 hour – 1 hour 30 minutes	1 hour 30 minutes – 2 hours	More than 2 hours
Watch TV without subtitles						
Watch TV with English subtitles						
Watch TV with subtitles in the home language						
Listen to English music						
Read English books, magazine, comics						
Gaming in English						
Youtube, use of social media in English						
Speak English						

– Which games does your child play? How often does he/she play these games?

– Youtube/social media: what does he/she watch? Which social media does he/she use (e.g. Snapchat, Instagram,...)?

In the HOME LANGUAGE	He/She doesn't do this.	Less than 30 minutes	30 minutes – 1 hour	1 hour – 1 hour 30 minutes	1 hour 30 minutes – 2 hours	More than 2 hours
Watch TV						
Listen to music						
Read books, magazines, comics						
Gaming						
Youtube, use of social media						

2. Does your child have any contact with people who speak English? Yes / No
 If yes, where, when, with whom?
 a. On holiday? Yes / No How often? _____
 b. At home? Yes / No How often? _____
 c. In other situations? Yes / No How often? _____
3. Does your child sometimes speak English? Yes / No
 If yes, where, when, with whom? _____
4. Does your child think English is a fun language? Yes / No
5. Does your child sometimes look for opportunities to speak English? Yes / No
 If yes, where, when, with whom? If no, why not?

Choice of Language:

1. What language did you want your child to study in school? Why?
2. What factors affected your choice of the current program?
3. Do you think it is important for your child to speak English? Why or why not?

General information:

1. Which language does your child usually speak with his/her mother? _____
 Which language does your child usually speak with his/her father? _____
 Which language does your child usually speak with his/her brothers/sisters? _____
 Which language does your child usually speak with his/her friends? _____
2. My child is a
☐ boy.
☐ girl.
3. My child has ____ brothers and ____ sisters. They are _____ years old.