

A COMPARISON OF HUNGARIAN AND KAZAKH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' LANGUAGE LEARNING PROFILES

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Abstract:

The aim of our study is to compare the language learning profiles of two distinct groups of students from the post-Soviet bloc: Hungarians and Kazakhs. The motivation driving the investigation is to understand how various individual difference variables interact with one another and shape learning behavior in various contexts. In order to map the differences, cross-sectional quantitative data were collected from 117 English BA students (59 Hungarian and 58 Kazakhstani) with the help of a standardized questionnaire. Three main constructs were investigated: second language learning motivation, second language learning anxiety, and self-efficacy beliefs. Our main results include the fact that in the Kazakhstani context international posture and language learning experience are the two motivational constructs that seem to predict how much effort students invest into learning English, while in the Hungarian sample it is more the learners' future vision and their self-perceptions of their English language abilities that seem to play a key role. As a result, the conclusion of our article is that individual variables and their interrelationship seem to be very much context-dependent even in the case of seemingly similar groups of BA English majors.

Keywords: individual differences, language learning motivation, language anxiety, self-efficacy

1 Introduction

Individual differences (ID) research in applied linguistics has recently begun to place an emphasis on investigating IDs in combination rather than in isolation to provide a more comprehensive view on language learners' profiles (Dekeyser, 2012; Dörnyei, 2010; Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). The call for investigating ID variables in constellations has resulted in a growing number of publications on the relationship of affect and motivation (e.g., Waninge, De Bot, & Dörnyei, 2014); willingness to communicate, anxiety, and motivation (MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011); motivation and self-regulation (Kormos & Csizér, 2014); motivation, anxiety, and self-efficacy (Piniel & Csizér, 2013, 2015); emotions and learner autonomy (Chateau & Candas, 2015) to name just a few. Many such studies focus on particular language learning contexts and primarily employ qualitative research methods (for instance, retrodictive modeling (e.g., Chan, Dörnyei, & Henry, 2015), or the idiodynamic method (see MacIntyre, 2012) that provide a deeper insight into the dynamics of individual language learning processes.

In spite of the fact that, momentarily, quantitative approaches to research on the relationship of individual differences have been somewhat pushed to the background, we feel that there is potential in employing quantitative methods as they allow for a direct comparison among distinct contexts. By way of comparison, we can demonstrate how the relationship between the elements of these ID constellations may vary from one language learning situation to another. More precisely, in our present study, we were interested in comparing the ID variables of motivation, anxiety and self-efficacy across two English language learning contexts of BA English majors at two universities. One of the universities was in Hungary and

the other in Kazakhstan. The rationale behind the choice of comparing these two particular contexts was the existence of an international agreement between the two institutions at the time of data collection, which allowed for the exchange of staff as well as students. Apart from this, theoretical considerations also motivated a multi-contextual approach to the investigation of ID variables, as the validity of a theory is generally considered to be strengthened by evidence from different contexts.

2 Background

Broadly speaking, the two countries in the focus of the present study are similar in that they are both part of the post-Soviet bloc, and are referred to as transitioning in terms of their economy from stage two to stage three of development, according to the Global Competitiveness Report (Schwab, 2014). As regards their education system, the Bologna Process has been introduced in both countries, and Hungary as well as Kazakhstan are members of the European Higher Education Area, which was established in 2010. Finally, in the two contexts, students in tertiary education also have various opportunities to study abroad with the help of ERASMUS and ERASMUS+ programs. Despite the similarities, the two countries differ on a number of characteristics; therefore, we introduce the two contexts in some details below.

2.1 Hungary

Hungary became independent from the Soviet bloc in 1989, which immediately impacted the language learning policy of the country as Russian was abolished overnight as the first compulsory foreign language to be taught (Dörnyei, Csizér, & Németh, 2006). As a result, changes in foreign language learning and teaching were documented in detail (see for example Vágó, 2000, 2007). This issue has always been at the forefront of interest in Hungary, a country that is generally considered to be monolingual (Medgyes & Miklósy, 2005). According to educational policies currently in effect, children start to learn their first foreign language (the available options being English, German, French, and Chinese) in grade 4 – at the age of 9 – at the latest, and the second foreign language in grade 7 at the earliest. This is in harmony with the European Union language policy goals of having trilingual European citizens (Nikolov, 2007). The data available from the 2014-15 academic year, cited by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (Central Statistical Office – Központi Statisztikai Hivatal), indicate that the majority of the children learn English in elementary schools, and the same is true for high school learners, with German being the second most widely studied foreign language in Hungary (Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 2015); further, about 5.6% of fulltime university students in Hungary are generally enrolled in foreign language major programs (Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 2010). Nevertheless, approximately 75% of the Hungarian majority population claim not to be able to hold a conversation in a foreign language (Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 2013), and in 2013, one fourth of graduating students could not obtain their degrees in higher education due to the fact that they did not meet the foreign language proficiency requirements (Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 2014). With regard to student mobility, about 8500 Hungarian students studied abroad (UNESCO's Institute for Statistics, 2014) out of the approximately 300 000 students enrolled in tertiary education in 2012-13 (see Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 2015)

2.2 Kazakhstan

The Republic of Kazakhstan gained its independence in 1991. The majority of the population consists of Kazakh-Russian bilinguals (Zagidullin & Zagidullina, 2013), and according to the 2009 census data, about seven million people are able to speak, read and write in the official language of the country, namely Kazakh, while about ten million speak, read, and write in Russian (The Agency on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2011).

In Kazakhstan, there seems to be an explicit and conscious top-down process of internationalization taking effect. Zagidullin and Zagidullina (2013) cite President Nazarbayev in verbalizing his vision of Kazakhstan becoming a trilingual country where Kazakh, Russian and English are spoken by everyone. This vision has also influenced policy and decision-making on different levels, further specified in the Tri-Unity of Languages Program of 2007, and in The State Program for the Development and Functioning of Languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan 2011-2020 (see Zagidullin & Zagidullina, 2013). One of the goals set out in the latter document is for 10, 15, and 20% of the population to be able to speak English by 2014, 2017, and 2020 respectively.

Through a centralized education system, these goals have also had their influence on the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language in higher education. Consequently, in 2010, Kazakhstan was registered as the 47th member of the Bologna Process (Li & Ashirbekov, 2014). Current goals in higher education aim at achieving 20% student mobility, establishing international offices in higher education institutions, and providing various grants promoting English language learning and internationalization processes (e.g., the Bolashak Scholars Program (see Kellner-Heinkele & Landau, 2012; Perna, Orosz, & Jumakulov, 2015). Based on data available online, around 49 000 students studied abroad in 2013 out of the approximately 780 000 students enrolled in tertiary education (International Consultants for Education and Fairs Monitor, 2014). Besides the language training of students, Li and Ashirbekov (2014) also mention the launch of language training programs for teachers as key components of the internationalization process in Kazakhstan.

2.3 English BA majors at the two universities

As mentioned above, the focus of our investigation was two universities between which in the academic years of 2013-14 and 2014-15 there was an international cooperation agreement. The Hungarian university is situated in the capital city and is one of the major universities in the country. The number of students commencing their studies in the BA English major in the 2014-15 academic year was 234 (“Elmúlt évek statisztikái (2001/Á-2016/Á) [Statistics of previous years (2001-2016)]”, n.d.). The English BA major is outlined as a three-year program. In contrast, the Kazakhstani university is considered to be a regional higher education institution with approximately 80 students studying English in three different BA programs: BA in Foreign Philology; BA in Foreign Languages: Two Foreign Languages; and BA in Translation Studies with Specialization in English. Here each program lasts for four years and ends with a BA degree.

Besides the differences in the length and the types of programs, there are also differences in language proficiency requirements for admission as well as in program structures. At the Hungarian university, the level of English language proficiency of the incoming students is around B1+, B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2001), whereas at the Kazakhstani university it is around A1+, A2 level. However, the number of credits (the basic unit used by the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System in order to ease student mobility and transfer of achievement across

countries (European Commission, 2015) allotted for language development can potentially compensate for this difference: while at the Hungarian university 23 credits are allocated for language learning, the number is 42-48 credits at the Kazakhstani university.

In spite of the distinctive features enumerated above, the following justify a comparison between the two: both universities are situated in countries that have gone through extensive political and economic change in the past few decades, which inevitably has left its mark on tertiary education; both universities are accredited higher education institutions, among others, offering BA level degrees in English; and both have subscribed to the Bologna Process. Therefore, in our present study, we set out to compare the two groups of language learners from these two universities and investigate how the constellation of individual difference variables of motivation, anxiety, and self-efficacy may vary locally. We expected that students' motivations, self-efficacy and language anxiety levels to be similar as they were all English majors; however, we also anticipated that the internal structures of the constructs under scrutiny and the variables influencing motivation would be different in the two contexts.

3 The individual constructs of the study

3.1 Language learning motivation

Second language (L2) learning motivation has been defined as students' choice of a goal and their effort, persistence and satisfaction in reaching this goal in second language learning (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). As motivation is a key component of second language learning, it has been thoroughly researched in past decades and a number of different theories, social and cognitive alike, have been put forward to explain differences between successful and unsuccessful language learners (for a review see Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). In recent years, one theory stands out as applicable in various social contexts and for this reason we have selected it as a central component of our study. The theory is called L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009) and it explains students' learning behavior by operationalizing their *Ideal* and *Ought-to* L2 selves as well as their language learning experiences. The *Ideal L2 self* is one's ideal self-image expressing the wish to become a competent L2 speaker. The *Ought-to L2 self* contains "attributes that one believes one ought to possess (i.e., various duties, obligations, or responsibilities) in order to avoid possible negative outcomes" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 106) associated with not being able to speak the L2. A third element of the L2 Motivational Self System is L2 learning experience, which covers "situation specific motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 106).

Comparative studies on L2 Motivational Self System seem to suggest that the *Ideal L2 self* is the strongest predictor of motivated learning behavior in most of the contexts (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Henry & Cliffordson, 2015), while the role of the *Ought-to L2 self* is usually significant but less pronounced. As for L2 learning experience, it seems to be a somewhat neglected component of the model, as explained by You, Dörnyei, and Csizér (2016), because of its different nature, i.e., it is not a self-related concept but summarizes various aspects of past learning experience, and as a result, it has been conceptualized slightly differently in various studies ranging from tapping L2 learning attitudes to L2 experience-related issues.

Still, its importance cannot be overlooked as has been shown in previous Hungarian studies (Csizér, 2012; Csizér & Lukács, 2010; Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Kormos & Csizér, 2008).

3.2 Language anxiety

Another individual variable that is included in the present study is language anxiety, which has been shown to exert mostly a negative influence on language learning outcomes (Horwitz, 1995; Horwitz & Young, 1991; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; MacIntyre, Noels, & Clément, 1997). Generally, any type of anxiety is viewed as “the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system” (Spielberger, 1983, p. 1). In particular, language anxiety is referred to as a situation-specific type of anxiety that develops through recurring inhibiting experiences in the foreign language classroom (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1991; MacIntyre, 1999) closely intertwined with learners’ fears of negative evaluation, test anxiety, and communication apprehension (Horwitz et al., 1991) as well as tied to the use of the four language skills (Apple, 2013; Pae, 2012). In the present study, we will refer to language anxiety as a composite of anxiety experienced in connection with foreign language use in the classroom and the four language skills of speaking, listening, writing, and reading.

Due to a lack of a model of language anxiety that could be tested across contexts, there have been very few comparative studies conducted with language anxiety as their focus. There have been many instances of operationalizing the construct with the help of translated versions of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al., 1991), but due to its malleable factor structure, results of studies from different contexts could not be contrasted directly. It seems that apart from inhibiting performance and impeding language learning success, language anxiety has a moderate negative relationship with motivation (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei, Csizér, & Németh, 2006; MacIntyre, 2002), and a stronger negative link with self-efficacy (Mills, Pajares, & Herron, 2007). The aim of the present study was to see how these relationships appear in different language learning environments and compare the strength of the links among these variables by using a skills approach to defining and operationalizing language anxiety in both contexts.

3.3 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy beliefs comprise a relatively new construct in individual differences research in applied linguistics. The concept appears in psychological literature as a cognitive construct which comprises “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). It is often also referred to as a set of beliefs (Wong, 2005) associated with learners’ ideas of whether they have the sufficient and adequate resources to perform foreign language related tasks and ultimately to learn a foreign language. These beliefs appear to exert their influence on the language learning process: they have been shown to predict language learning success attained at language courses (Mill, Pajares, & Herron, 2007); they have been directly and positively linked to motivated learning behavior (Piniel & Csizér, 2013), most probably by increasing the learner’s level of persistence and effort (Zimmerman, 2000); and self-efficacy beliefs have been negatively linked with anxiety (Bandura, 1988) in general and language anxiety in particular (Piniel & Csizér, 2013). This network of relationships with other ID variables renders promising the investigation of self-efficacy, alongside motivation and anxiety.

3.4 Research questions

The research questions that guided the present study were formulated as follows:

- How do the internal structures of the various components concerning FL learning motivation, FL skills-related anxiety and self-efficacy compare among BA English majors at a Hungarian and a Kazakhstani university?
- What differences and similarities between English majors at a Hungarian and a Kazakhstani university concerning their FL learning motivation, FL skills-related anxiety and self-efficacy can be identified based on the students' perceptions?
- What differences and similarities can be identified between English majors at a Hungarian and a Kazakhstani university in terms of what predicts BA English major students' motivated learning behavior can be identified based on their perceptions?

4 Methods

In order to investigate the questions posed above, we devised a study with a quantitative design. Data was collected with the Hungarian and Russian version of the same instrument to tap into BA level English language learners' motivation, self-efficacy, and language anxiety. Russian was opted for because, as mentioned above, Russian is more widely spoken in Kazakhstan than Kazakh.

4.1 Participants

We used convenience sampling to recruit our participants from the partner universities we had access to with the selection criteria that learners be enrolled in a language development class in their respective programs. Since learners at the Kazakhstani university were expected to attend compulsory language classes from their first year of study until their fourth year, while at the Hungarian university, compulsory language classes were offered in the first and second year of the program, our participants came from years 1 through 4 in Kazakhstan and years 1 and 2 in Hungary. All together 117 students participated in the study: 59 Hungarian and 58 Kazakhstani learners, with a gender distribution of 95 females and 22 males (44 females and 15 males in the Hungarian group, and 51 females and 7 males in the Kazakhstani group), which illustrates well the gender distribution at the two universities. The participants' mean age was 20.15 ($Mean_H = 20.31$, $Std. Dev. = 1.57$; $Mean_K = 20.00$, $Std. Dev. = 1.07$). On average, the students in both groups started learning English as a foreign language around age 10 ($Mean_H = 9.44$, $Std. Dev. = 3.44$; $Mean_K = 10.80$, $Std. Dev. = 3.68$).

4.2 Instrument

In order to gather data, we compiled a survey that included ten scales consisting of 59 five-point Likert-scale items measuring the constructs under scrutiny. Language learners' motivation was measured as a composite of the following:

- a. *Motivated learning behavior* (5 items) (based on Kormos & Csizér, 2008;) describes how much effort students are willing to invest in language learning. Sample item: *I am willing to work hard at learning English.*
- b. *Ideal L2 self* (4 items) (based on Kormos & Csizér, 2008;) measures students' vision about their future language use. Sample item: *I like to think of myself as someone who will be able to speak English.*
- c. *Ought-to L2 self* (7 items) (based on Kormos & Csizér, 2008;) asks about external pressures concerning learning English. Sample item: *If I fail to learn English I'll be letting other people down.*
- d. *Language learning experience* (4 items) (based on Kormos & Csizér, 2008;) inquires about participants' past experience concerning learning English. Sample item: *English lessons are always fun.*
- e. *International posture* (4 items) (based on Kormos & Csizér, 2008;) describes students' attitudes towards the global status of English. Sample item: *Learning English is necessary because it is an international language.*

Constructs related to language classroom anxiety were operationalized as follows:

- a. Foreign language speaking anxiety (7 items) (based on Horwitz et al., 1991; Tóth, 2008): emotion accompanied by feelings of inhibition experienced while speaking in the foreign language in the classroom. Sample item: *I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students in language practice class.*
- b. Foreign language writing anxiety (6 items) (based on Cheng, Horwitz, & Schallert, 1999): an emotion linked with feelings of worry experienced in connection with writing in the language classroom. Sample item: *I never seem to be able to clearly write down my ideas in English in language practice class.*
- c. Foreign language reading anxiety (5 items) (based on Saito, Garza, & Horwitz, 1999): an emotion associated with negative, inhibitory feelings while reading in the foreign language. Sample item: *When I'm reading in English in class, I get so confused I can't remember what I'm reading.*
- d. Foreign language listening anxiety (6 items) (based on Vogely, 1998): an emotion related to worry and negative feelings connected to listening to foreign language speech. Sample item: *I get nervous when I don't understand every word that is said to me in English in language practice class.*

Self-efficacy beliefs were operationalized as a person's thoughts about their abilities to perform particular language skills related tasks in, as well as outside the foreign language classroom (11 items) (based on Bandura, 2006). Sample item: *I am confident that I can do the silent reading tasks in the EFL class.*

The questionnaire was compiled in Hungarian by the first two authors and piloted using a think aloud protocol with the help of potential participants from the same university population. After minor adjustments (e.g., making a clear distinction between reading out loud and reading to oneself silently), the instrument was translated and back-translated to English by experts proficient both in Hungarian and English, and the English version was subsequently translated and back-translated to Russian by the third and fourth authors. After consulting with colleagues, the versions were finalized and adapted to the particular contexts by referring the respondents to their respective language development classes (in the Hungarian context referred to as 'language practice' and in the Kazakhstani context referred to as 'English classes'). The final versions of the questionnaires are available upon request from the authors. The instrument took about 25-30 minutes to fill in and was distributed in

language development classes in both institutions. The students' participation was voluntary, and their anonymity was ensured throughout the project with the help of assigned codes.

4.3 Data analysis

The data from the questionnaire were recorded on a spreadsheet using the participants' codes and subjected to descriptive statistical analysis. Then, in order to compare how the constructs fared in the two contexts, principal components analysis was used along with reliability analysis based on calculating Cronbach's alpha values. With the help of Principal Components Analysis (PCA), researchers can reduce the number of items on a scale such that it still accounts for maximum variability in the dataset. By comparing the results of PCA conducted on the data drawn from the two contexts, we can see whether the same items were chosen as to retain the maximum information about the construct. Once the scales were established, we contrasted the mean scores for each scale in the two contexts using t-tests. Finally, separate regression analyses were run to determine and also to compare the key predictors of *Motivated Learning Behavior* in the two university contexts.

5 Results and discussion

5.1 Similarities and differences based on the analyses of the scales

The results of PCA show that in the case of three of the scales, namely *Language Learning Experience*, *Speaking Anxiety*, and *Listening Anxiety*, in both groups, the same items were found to load onto the said dimensions. This means that the same items covered a large part of the variation within each group (with only one item difference in the *Motivated Learning Behavior* scale). In the case of *International Posture*, *Self-Efficacy*, and *Writing Anxiety*, however, there were some differences in terms of the scales' content.

Concerning the construct of *International Posture*, the item *I'd like to know English well enough to be able to communicate with foreigners* was found to contribute to the scale only in the Hungarian context, whereas the item *It's important to learn English because it's an international language* proved to carry information in terms of the variance in the Kazakhstani but not the Hungarian context. The reasons behind these discrepancies could be related to the everyday needs of the students and use of English as a lingua franca. On the one hand, in Hungary, most people seem to treat the international character of English as a well-known fact (see Kontra & Csizér, 2011), and for Hungarian learners it seems wishing to use English for international communication has more of a personalized motive attached to it. On the other hand, in Kazakhstan, the notion that English is an international language goes hand in hand with other general dispositions of the necessity to learn English in order to use it as a lingua franca. The importance of English language knowledge is echoed in the government policies and regulations of Kazakhstan, but it somewhat contradicts everyday practice, since it is mostly Russian which is used in the region as a lingua franca among the various ethnic groups (Dave, 2007). Consequently, international mobility and the use of Russian are also more typical among Kazakhstan and the neighboring countries, post-Soviet countries, and Russia (Li & Ashirbekov, 2014).

Another area where PCA showed discrepancies concerned *Self-efficacy* beliefs. Contrary to our expectations, self-perceptions of being able to use English in speaking, writing, reading and listening in and outside the classroom did not form a coherent construct.

As a result of PCA, in the Hungarian context, in the component of university students' self-efficacy beliefs about their language abilities, one item had to be dropped from the analysis as it did not load onto the given dimension (*I can understand what is said in English in class*) and one on reading abilities (*I can understand what I read in English outside of class*). We may presume that the abilities that students need in order to cope with reading and listening material in the university English classroom are very different from what they generally come up against in their everyday lives concerning English language use; therefore, they did not form part of an overarching construct of general self-efficacy beliefs about language use. The self-efficacy beliefs of the Kazakhstani group, however, seemed to be more coherent with the exception of one item referring to writing in English outside the classroom (*I'm sure that I can express my thoughts in writing in English outside the classroom*). It again may be the case that students need to write more often in the foreign language class than outside; thus, it is not meaningful to combine the two under the heading of foreign language self-efficacy.

Interestingly, regarding the PCA results of the *Writing Anxiety* scale, in the Hungarian context an item suggesting high levels of writing anxiety (*When I'm assigned to write a composition in English, I know that I'm going to write it poorly*) was excluded from the analysis, whereas in the Kazakhstani context a key-reversed item (*I like writing in English*) describing the lack of writing anxiety could not be added to the principal component. For some reason, these items did not prove to add meaningful information to the construct in the respective contexts. Two suggestions lend themselves as explanations: it may be that these feelings are not experienced by the students in connection with writing. In the Hungarian context, the BA curriculum includes three academic writing courses, where heavy emphasis is laid on the process of writing (Tankó, 2011) and as a final written product, at the end of their BA program, students have to write a BA thesis in English for which they are provided continuous supervision and support. Therefore, in the Hungarian context, the item is not meaningful in the sense that students are rarely assigned a grade on a written product without any chance of improvement. In the Kazakhstani BA program, however, writing is embedded in the general English language classes, and at the end of their studies, students' theses are expected to be written in Kazakh or Russian. Hence, the role of writing instruction is not highlighted as much. Consequently, students may not be so conscious about their feelings towards writing in English; thus, their responses to the item "*I like writing in English-*" does not explain a large amount of variability as writing in English is probably an activity they generally do not often engage in.

Concerning the reliability of the scales (see Table 1), seven were found to have an acceptable level of internal consistency with reliability coefficients of .6 or above, namely in the case of *International Posture*, *Language Learning Experience*, *Motivated Learning Behavior*, *Speaking Anxiety*, *Writing Anxiety*, *Listening Anxiety*, and *Self-efficacy* scales. Marked differences were found, however, in the reliability of the *Ideal L2 Self* (Hungarian context: $\alpha = .84$; Kazakhstani context: $\alpha = .58$) and *Reading Anxiety* (Hungarian context: $\alpha = -.26$; Kazakhstani context: $\alpha = .66$). In case of the *Ideal L2 Self*, it seems that Hungarian students have a more coherent vision of themselves speaking English as an L2; whereas in the Kazakhstani context, there may have been greater variability among the learners in terms of a future vision in connection with the English language, which did not allow for consistent measurement of the construct. As regards *Reading Anxiety*, the opposite was true: in the Kazakhstani context learners had a more coherent view on reading in English, while in the Hungarian context variability was so great that the construct could not be measured consistently. Finally, the measurement of the *Ought-to L2 Self* construct did not prove to be reliable in either context; therefore, it was discarded from further analyses. In summary, we

can conclude that despite some item-level differences in the scales, Hungarian and Kazakh university students show similarities concerning the investigated factor structure.

Scale	Context	Number of items	Reliability (α)
Ideal L2 self	K	3	.58
	H	4	.84
International posture	K	5	.62
	H	5	.67
Language learning experience	K	5	.70
	H	5	.89
Motivated learning behavior	K	4	.72
	H	4	.71
Speaking anxiety	K	7	.80
	H	7	.81
Writing anxiety	K	6	.79
	H	5	.83
Reading anxiety	K	4	.66
	H	3	-.26*
Listening anxiety	K	6	.84
	H	6	.84
Self-efficacy	K	11	.94
	H	10	.92

Table 1. The reliability of the scales in the Hungarian and Kazakhstani contexts

Note: H= Hungarian; K= Kazakhstani; *= the reliability coefficient for the Hungarian reading anxiety scale was negative despite having reversed the key reversed items

5.2 Differences in the magnitude of motivation, anxiety and self-efficacy in the two contexts

Turning to the seven constructs with scales of acceptable psychometric properties, generally the university BA students in the two contexts were more different than alike. In spite of a general agreement amongst BA students in both contexts on English being an important tool for international communication ($Mean_H = 4.56$, $Std. Dev. = .46$; $Mean_K = 4.47$, $Std. Dev. = .46$ (see Table 2)), on all the other motivational constructs, language anxiety and self-efficacy measures, our participants had markedly different answers.

Based on the results of independent samples t-tests, our data suggest that although in both contexts the average rate of motivated learning behavior is quite high (see Table 2), Hungarian students reported investing significantly more effort into learning English than

their Kazakhstani peers. Likewise, Hungarian students seem to have significantly more positive classroom language learning experiences and a very strong ideal L2 self, linked to English language learning. On the other hand, language learning skills-related anxiety levels were moderately low (approaching the theoretical mean of three on a five-point scale) in both groups with those of the Kazakhstani learners being significantly higher than those of their Hungarian counterparts, where they were comparable. Interestingly, in both contexts, the learners' listening anxiety levels were relatively higher than the feelings of inhibition experienced with regard to the other skills. This may suggest that in the former context reading in a foreign language poses higher challenges whereas in the latter it is listening to someone speak English that is tied to relatively more nervousness. Overall, it seems that the Kazakhstani group with lower levels of motivation and higher levels of anxiety can also be characterized by significantly lower levels of self-efficacy. This is parallel to what has been found in previous studies as well: generally, lower levels of motivation tend to go hand in hand with lower levels of self-efficacy and higher levels of anxiety (Piniel & Csizér, 2013).

Variable	Context	Mean	Std. Dev.	t	df	p
Motivated learning behavior	K	4.29	.59	3.29	115	< .01
	H	4.48	.58			
International posture	K	4.47	.46	1.02	115	.08
	H	4.56	.46			
Ideal L2 self	K	-	-	-	-	-
	H	4.93	.27			
Language learning experience	K	3.66	.62	4.04	115	< .05
	H	4.17	.73			
Speaking anxiety	K	2.65	.76	4.61	115	< .01
	H	2.06	.73			
Writing anxiety	K	2.48	.74	3.62	115	< .01
	H	2.01	.74			
Reading anxiety	K	2.22	.68	-	-	-
	H	-	-			
Listening anxiety	K	2.99	.87	5.46	115	< .01
	H	2.16	.78			
Self-efficacy	K	3.98	.62	3.56	115	< .01
	H	4.32	.59			

Table 2. Results of independent samples t-tests comparing Hungarian and Kazakhstani learners' motivation, anxiety and self-efficacy

Note: H= Hungarian context; K= Kazakhstani context; Means calculated based on a five-point scale.

5.3 Differences in what factors predict motivated learning behavior

In the final analyses, we looked at what factors predict BA students' motivated learning behavior in both contexts. Based on our data, it appears that the predictors of motivated learning behavior are quite distinct in the two contexts (see Tables 3 and 4). In the Kazakhstani sample, the main determinant of the amount of effort students invest into learning English seems to be reading anxiety, followed by the international status of English and students' language learning experiences. That is, the lower the level of reading anxiety, the higher the level of importance linked to English used in international communication, and the more positive the learning experiences, the more effort students will invest into learning English. While in the Hungarian university context, the students' ideal L2 self plays a key role in motivation. This is also backed up by results of previous studies on L2 motivation among university students (Csizér, 2012). Interestingly, listening anxiety seems to have a facilitating effect on motivation among Hungarian students (in Table 2, it was shown that although the average of the Hungarian students' scores on the listening anxiety scale is higher than on other anxiety measures, it is still below the theoretical mean of 3). This is an interesting result, and more investigation is warranted on the direction (positive/negative) in which certain levels of anxiety influence motivation. Finally, the third determinant of motivated learning behavior in the Hungarian sample is self-efficacy. This link does not come as a surprise, as self-efficacy has been argued to be strongly related to motivation (Zimmerman, 2000).

Scales	Beta	t	p
Reading anxiety	-.46	-4.96	<.001
International posture	.31	3.51	<.001
Language learning experience	.31	3.31	.002

$R^2=.61$

Table 3. Predictors of motivated learning behavior in the Kazakhstani context

Scales	Beta	t	p
Ideal L2 self	.31	2.66	.01
Listening anxiety	.36	2.81	.007
Self-efficacy beliefs	.50	3.75	<.001

$R^2=.37$

Table 4. Predictors of motivated learning behavior in the Hungarian context

6 Conclusion

Regarding the research questions, we found that the two groups (a sample of university BA English majors in Kazakhstan and another one in Hungary) differed somewhat in terms of which items measured the constructs under scrutiny: language learning

motivation, language anxiety, and self-efficacy. Surprisingly, we also found some measurement scales not to work at all in one of the contexts: the *Ideal L2 Self* in the Kazakhstani and *Reading Anxiety* in the Hungarian one. Notably, however, *Language Learning Experience*, *Speaking Anxiety*, and *Listening Anxiety* could be measured with the help of the same items in both groups, which is very promising given the fact that the scales were administered in different languages: Russian and Hungarian. These results allowed us to continue with the comparison of the students' levels of language learning motivation, language anxiety, and self-efficacy.

Based on our findings, we can say that the importance of learning English for international communication purposes prevails in both contexts. Generally, both samples were characterized by low levels of skills anxiety, and it appears that both groups of students would benefit from more positive experiences of language learning and enhanced positive self-efficacy beliefs. In terms of influential factors related to BA English major students' motivated learning behavior, there were marked differences between the two samples: in the Kazakhstani context international posture and language learning experience are the two motivational constructs that have a significant influence on the learners' invested efforts, while in the Hungarian sample it was more the learners' future visions of themselves as users of English and their self-perceptions of their English language abilities that seemed to play a key role in the effort invested in learning.

In our study, we have found that, despite standardization processes in higher education in Europe and worldwide, individual variables and their interrelationship seem to be very much context-dependent even in the case of seemingly similar groups of BA English majors. Although our research was not without limitations in terms of the restricted sample size and the measurement tools not always yielding comparable data, our findings are not counterintuitive. The great variability of contexts raises further questions as to how and to what extent the particular institutions, staff, and students in contrasting environments can benefit from mobility opportunities and the internationalization of educational processes. In order to make exchanges meaningful, adequate preparation is necessary on the individual as well as the institutional level. For this, further investigations are warranted to gain more insight from stakeholders on the inevitable contrast between the different educational and cultural contexts of partner institutions.

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