

# SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' CONTACT EXPERIENCES AND DISPOSITIONS TOWARDS ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE – A PILOT STUDY

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**Abstract:** The objective of this small-scale study is twofold. On the one hand, it investigates the contact experiences and the attitude of secondary school students towards English as an international language. On the other, it offers an insight into the validation of a questionnaire by foregrounding the process where a pilot questionnaire has been evaluated and amendments have been suggested. The research is based on a sample comprising 50 secondary school students living in Budapest. The main finding of this study is that an awareness of the role of English in international contexts of communication does not result in increased openness towards various varieties of English and the search for contact opportunities on the part of the learners. The results of the study also indicate that the notion of English as an international language as a simplified language and its subsequent demotivating influence seem to diminish the amount of effort learners are prepared to devote to the learning of English outside the classroom.

**Keywords:** English as an international language, motivated learning behaviour, contact experiences

## 1 Introduction

Despite the fact that 20 years have passed since the liberalization of foreign language teaching in Hungary, Hungarians still lack the necessary foreign language knowledge to function successfully in the increasingly globalized world (Special Eurobarometer, 2006). As a result, research in the field of language pedagogy has been increasingly active in order to assess the situation and provide solutions to the problem indicated above (Vágó, 2007). The two most important individual difference variables, language learning motivation and foreign language learning aptitude, have been investigated in various groups of Hungarian learners (for a summary see Csizér, 2009; Ottó, 2002; Sáfár & Kormos, 2008). In addition, several classroom observation projects were carried out in order to survey foreign language teaching in classroom settings (e.g., Fekete, Major & Nikolov, 1999). Moreover, the role of intercultural contact experiences was investigated in order to find out how contact and students' attitudes might interact (Csizér & Kormos, 2009). In spite of the fact that a number of these studies touched upon the issue of English as an international language (EIL) (for a summary see Dörnyei, Csizér & Németh, 2006),

no research has been dedicated to the investigation of the role of EIL in Hungary and the exposure of students to native and non-native varieties of English in and outside of the classroom. As a consequence, we have no information on students' awareness of differences concerning English varieties they learn at school and the English which is used in and out of school contexts. In this article, therefore, we intend to provide insight into these issues.

The present paper reports on the findings of a pilot study with the aim of validating a questionnaire measuring students' dispositions towards various issues concerning English language use in and outside school, comprising contact experiences with both native and non-native speakers of English and EIL related attitudes. The paper starts by outlining the problem and a literature review of two fields: EIL and intercultural contact studies in Hungary. The Results section of the paper describes the validation process and discusses the components established with the help of principal component analysis. Finally, the implications for a forthcoming study are outlined.

## **2 Literature review**

### **2.1 The problem**

Despite major changes in the status and teaching of foreign languages and English in particular (Medgyes & Miklósy, 2000), there is still room for improvement in language education in Hungary. According to a Eurobarometer survey (Special Eurobarometer, 2006), Hungary is among the six member states where the majority of the population (56%) report that they do not speak any foreign languages. The other predominantly monolingual countries are Ireland (66%), the United Kingdom (62%), Italy (59%), Portugal (58%) and Spain (56%). At the other end of the scale, multilingual speakers reside in countries such as Luxembourg (99% speaks at least one language apart from their mother tongue, 92% two and 69% three) and the Netherlands (91% percent speaks at least one language apart from their mother tongue, 75% two and 34% three languages).

### **2.2 English language teaching (ELT)**

In Hungary, as in many other countries in Europe, the UK has long been seen as the model of English language use as well as the main provider of English language teaching methodology. This language-use based approach to foreign language teaching rests on the tenet that those who speak the language as their mother tongue know how to use it appropriately which then, in turn, allegedly makes them better language users and teachers. As a result, native speakers "become the custodians and arbiters not only of proper English but of proper pedagogy as well" (Widdowson, 1994, p.387). The monolingual language experience of the UK thus gives rise to language teaching pedagogy which is "determinedly monolingual" in that "[t]he assumption is still that the only reality that is to be admitted to the classroom is that which is associated with the L2" (Widdowson, 2003, p.152). The monolingual perspective is reflected in the terminology of ELT as well: users of English are either native or non-native speakers but

seldom bi- or multilinguals (Jenkins, 2009a). Mainstream theories investigating language acquisition venture as far as a second language, often without any reference to further languages and their learning.

This monolingual teaching and native speaker dominance can, however, be challenged as inappropriate on several fronts. First of all, it is out of line with EU targets which aim at multilingualism, i.e., that all EU citizens should be able to speak two languages in addition to their mother tongue (Special Eurobarometer 2006, p.9). Secondly, nowadays English is often used as a *lingua franca* in contexts where native speakers are not present (Modiano, 2001a, p.161). In fact, according to some estimates, 80% of verbal exchanges in which English is used as a second or foreign language do not involve any native speakers of English (Seidlhofer, 2004, p.209).

It appears that, with respect to language teaching targets and achievements, countries like Holland may be better qualified than Britain to advise on matters of language pedagogy. The question then naturally arises as to what makes the Dutch such successful language learners. Although in some respects (the number of languages taught and the fact that English is compulsory between the ages 11-18) Holland fares better, EU statistics (Eurydice, 2005) reveal no major differences in the organization of English language teaching between the two countries which could explain the huge gap in their language learning performance. Consequently, some of the reasons for the success of Dutch language learners may lie elsewhere, outside the classroom, for example.

The most common explanation is that foreign language programmes on TV are not dubbed but subtitled (Booij, 2001) and that viewers have access to a variety of English speaking channels in Holland (van Essen, 1997). But with the introduction of cable and satellite TV, television can also serve as a source of contact with English in Hungary as well. The difference, however, is that Hungarians are less willing to make the effort and watch foreign films in the original language. In the Special Eurobarometer survey (2006, p.58) 90% of Dutch respondents agreed with the statement “I prefer to watch foreign films and programs with subtitles, rather than dubbed”, whereas only 15% of Hungarians indicated a similar preference. Of course, this can be a vicious circle: those who prefer undubbed movies improve their language competence through this practice which, in turn, makes them more prepared and willing to watch films with subtitles rather than in their first language.

Another often cited reason for the success of language teaching in Holland is the popularity of English at Dutch universities. Dissertations can be written in Dutch, French, German and English but in practice about 80% of the dissertations are submitted in English (Booij, 2001). Here, again, the Dutch have a clear advantage. These are, however, practical matters which facilitate language learning but cannot fully account for the difference in achievement in the field of language learning between Hungary and Holland. A more determining factor, it seems, is the differing perspective language education has adopted in the two countries. In Holland English is perceived and used as an international language, as a pan-European *lingua franca* (Booij, 2001), where the word ‘as’ refers to **how** English is treated and taught rather than to the international variety of English which is presently being described in projects such as the 'Vienna Oxford International Corpus of English' (VOICE) at the University of Vienna. In contrast, in Hungary the target and the yardstick is the idealized native-speaker's

English which is taught through the monolingual pedagogy suggested by native speaker users of the language (Widdowson, 1994, 2003).

This dichotomy roughly corresponds to what Modiano (2001a) calls traditional practices which are based on British English monolingual norms and alternative practices which not only develop “the ability to comprehend a wide range of varieties, but also strive to utilize language which has a high likelihood of being comprehensible among a broad section of the peoples who comprise the English-using world” (Modiano, 2001a, p.162). In other words, whereas Hungarian educationalists condone what Holliday calls native-speakerism (“an established belief that ‘native speaker’ teachers represent a ‘Western culture’ from which spring the ideals both of the English language and of English language teaching methodology” (Holliday, 2005, p.6), in Holland English is used both inter- and intranationally, and as a result, learners and users of English have appropriated the language to such an extent that English is now “in the process of shifting towards L2 status” (Graddol, 1997, p.11).

Given the increasing importance and current relevance of these two perspectives, the discussion that follows will centre on issues related to English as an international language and the impact this has on the teaching of English.

### 2.3 English as an international language

The term English as an international language refers to the fact that the use of English has moved beyond the confines of native-speaker communication and has expanded globally. The most influential model to capture the spread of the English language has been suggested by Kachru (1992, p.356), which describes world Englishes in terms of what the author describes as three concentric circles (Figure 1).

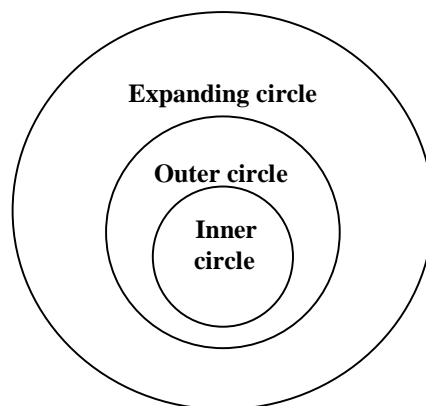


Figure 1. Model of the spread of the English language (based on Kachru, 1992, p. 356)

“These circles represent the types of spread, the patterns of acquisition, and the functional allocation of English in diverse cultural contexts” (Kachru, 1992, p.356). In the Inner Circle English is spoken as a native language in countries like Britain and the countries of the first

diaspora (when English was transported to the New World), such as North America, Australia and New Zealand. In the Outer Circle English is used as a second language in countries where the language spread in the second diaspora, during the colonization of Africa and Asia. In the Expanding Circle English is spoken as a foreign language, and countries where English is used in EFL contexts include, among many others, Hungary. English in the Inner Circles is often described as norm providing, in the Outer Circle as norm-developing and in the Expanding Circle as norm-dependent.

Since speakers of all three circles participate in the global use of English, the term English as an international language often refers to the distribution of English across all of Kachru's regions (Seidlhofer, 2004). *Lingua franca*, on the other hand, is defined as a "contact language used among people who do not share a first language, and is commonly understood to mean a second (or subsequent) language of its speakers" (Jenkins, 2007, p.1). English as a *lingua franca* (ELF) is therefore most commonly associated with Kachru's Expanding Circle. More recently, however, the terms English as an international language and English as a *lingua franca* have been used interchangeably (Jennifer Jenkins, personal communication, The Third International Conference of English as a Lingua Franca, Vienna, May 2010).

The fact that English is used internationally necessarily implies that it is a language which is being shaped by both its native and non-native speakers. This state of affairs then calls into question the norm dependency of the Expanding Circle as well as the norm-providing status of Inner Circle speakers. EIL thus forces linguists and language educators to reconsider the ownership of English. According to Widdowson, no nation has custody over the development of English as an international language: "But the point is that it is only international to the extent that it is not their [native speakers'] language. It is not a property for them to lease out to others while retaining the freehold. Other people actually own it" (Widdowson, 2003, p.43).

In order to appropriate the language, bi- or multilingual speakers of English should not only enjoy equal rights but should share the responsibilities of ownership as well. According to Trifonovitch (Trifonovitch, 1985), for non-native speakers to redress the existing imbalance and challenge native-speaker dominance, non-natives have to overcome their inferiority complex and assert themselves. Thus, the teacher who believes that non-native speaker teachers cannot have "pertinent ideas in the presence of a native speaker" and they had better not "contaminate the air still resonant with the voice of a real native speaker" (Medgyes, 1983, p.3) maintains the asymmetrical relationship between the two types of users of English and reduces the chances of ever becoming the proprietor of English.

## 2.4 Teaching English as an international language

Kachru (1992) suggested that the international use of English and the subsequent emergence of World Englishes, including English as a *lingua franca* in Europe (see Seidlhofer, 2004 and the VOICE project) will necessitate a paradigm shift in the teaching of English. According to Kachru, one of the key points in this respect is the exposure to varieties of English, both native and non-native. The importance of exposure to the different varieties of English has been emphasized by other researchers in the field (Luis, 2009; Modiano, 2001a; Modiano, 2001b; Trifonovitch, 1985). It seems that the conditions for such broad exposure have never been more

favorable. It is, in fact, almost impossible to avoid encounter with the English language. English is indeed all around: “English does not only enter Europe through European institutions and education, that is in a top-down process, but also individually or bottom-up through popular music, dance, sports, or computers” (Seidlhofer, Breiteneder & Pitzl, 2006, p.4). English, however, is present even in more everyday contexts. A trip to the supermarket or a grocery shop anywhere in Hungary, where product labels are often in English as well, clearly provides evidence for this.

Since exposure does not guarantee that learning takes place, teachers have to make sure that their students notice what they hear or see (Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Schmidt, 1990). In so doing, teachers would need to bring the ‘outside’ into the classroom and to design tasks which raise learners’ awareness of the language around them, thus ensuring that input becomes intake.

Since the majority of the worldwide users of English are non-native, among the Englishes that find their way into the language classroom, non-native varieties, especially the local variety, should also feature (e.g., publications by Hungarian authors who write in English). These and other ‘non-standard’ varieties do, by definition, deviate from the standard norm and will be different in detail from Standard British or American English. Although it is very unlikely that *Stevens’* observation (“many native speakers – [...] – overtly or unconsciously despise these varieties”; *Stevens*, 1992, p.37) accurately describes the sentiment of the majority of native speakers today, it is widely believed, and paradoxically predominantly among non-native speakers, that non-native varieties do not represent the ‘genuine article’ and are ‘bad English’, inferior to the kind English native speakers use. Such attitudes towards non-standard varieties ignore, paradoxically again, the basic fact that even in native-speaker contexts the standard variety is preferred and spoken by only a small minority of speakers. In Britain, for example, Standard English is used by 12-15% of the population, about 10% of whom speak it with a regional accent rather than RP (*Jenkins*, 2009a, p.36).

Studies aimed at assessing language learner attitude towards native and non-native varieties of English have confirmed the existence of bias towards native varieties. Results of research conducted among 35 2<sup>nd</sup>-year students at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Constanta, Romania showed that “students reacted more positively toward the native accents than they did toward the ESL and EFL accents” (*Luis*, 2009, p.33). Overall, students found the British English speaker’s accent the friendliest and the most polished accent. *Feyér* (2009), in his small-scale study conducted with Hungarian learners of English (in order to find out how the participants respond to French, Arab, Scottish and Standard British accents) has reported similar findings:

[...] Standard British pronunciation received the highest scores in every respect. It was considered to be the epitome of correct English and the most desirable outcome of language learning. The overwhelmingly positive reception of the accent was projected onto the speaker as well, evoking invariably positive stereotypes corresponding to general stereotypes of British people, such as politeness, good humour and good education (*Feyér*, 2009, p.49).

One of the implications of these findings for language pedagogy is that in order for non-native speakers to come of age and assert themselves as competent users of English, the teaching

of English should entail not only the development of familiarity with native and non-native varieties but also equal acceptance of non-native and non-standard uses and speakers.

In international contexts, communication in English is laden with unpredictabilities: non-native speakers who use English as a contact language speak the language differently and come from cultures with differing norms of what is seen as acceptable and appropriate language behaviour. In order to be able to cope with the demands of the use of EIL, users of English have to employ strategies which enable them to be intelligible and accessible for all types of audiences. Speakers, therefore, need to be addressee-oriented, and have to consider and cater for the linguistic and pragmatic needs of their interlocutors. In other words, they have to accommodate, make adjustments and adapt their speech and behaviour, often online, in order to be able to arrive at mutual understanding. Accommodation in non-native speaker communication, for instance, can affect the interactants' pronunciation and the use, or rather, avoidance of idiomatic language (Jenkins, 2009b).

The highly unpredictable nature of international communication also implies that there is no single set of norms which would govern appropriateness in interaction. Since the norms are relative and the goalposts are constantly shifting, users of English need to be prepared to work out the answers to the linguistic and pragmatic questions that various contexts of use throw at them. In order to be able to cope with fluctuating norms and unforeseen eventualities, learners also have to learn how to gauge a situation and adapt to the (ever-changing) new circumstances. From contextual cues they need to be able to work out the extent of politeness, clarity or informativeness that a particular context requires. The preparation of learners for lifelong problem solving then assumes an "educational operation which seeks to provide learners with a general capacity to enable them to cope with undefined eventualities in the future" (Widdowson, 1983, p.6). In other words, the teaching of English should focus on the process of communication with a variety of speakers rather than on the preparation of learners for interaction with the relatively small group of native-speakers who speak Standard English with an RP accent.

## **2.5 Intercultural contact studies in Hungary**

There has already been some research into intercultural contact and its role in foreign language learning in Hungary (Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Dörnyei & Csizér, 2005; Dörnyei et al., 2006; Kormos & Csizér, 2007). Except for one (Kormos & Csizér, 2007), they are large-scale quantitative studies which examine the relationship between various types of contact and their impact on learners' attitudes towards the target language, the target language communities and their language learning at school. Since the focus of the analysis in all the papers above has been the effect of intercultural contact on student motivation, the notion of EIL and its implications have been mentioned only in passing. The present study intends to fill the gap and bring issues related to EIL into focus.

Contrary to expectations, there was little evidence of direct written contact (email, chat, snail mail), that is, interactive forms of communication (e.g., Kormos & Csizér, 2007). It has been found that Hungarian students come across English more frequently in indirect cultural products, such as TV, the Internet, books and films, which do not require active participation and the production of English. The question then arises whether the introduction of social websites

and other Web 2.0 products has redressed this balance and learners are now engaged in a more active manner. The possible (and desirable) change in learner attitude in Hungary is another issue this inquiry hopes to reveal.

When compared with learners of German, learners of English were found to perceive the language and its speakers more positively than their German learning counterparts. It appears that one of the reasons why learners of English display a positive attitude towards English is the role English plays as an international language and the pragmatic benefits which stem from its unique position. Even though students are aware of the importance of learning English and the fact that proficiency in English allows them to participate in global contexts, in the interviews involving 40 13-, 14-year-old learners of English (Kormos & Csizér, 2007) the results showed that, somewhat contradictorily, students still view native speakers as the source of the target language and the driving force behind their motivation: “If I meet more English people, I will learn English more willingly because this is a world language, and I can make myself understood with everyone” (Kormos & Csizér, 2007, p.253).

Such findings may be partially due to the fact that encounters with non-native speakers have not been dealt with separately from native speaker contacts in previous studies. An investigation of how Hungarian learners view non-native speakers of English and the particular variety they use can reveal whether students are aware of the wider implications of English as a global language. In this pilot study, contact experiences with native and non-native speakers are distinguished to examine whether worldwide trends, such as the increasing dominance of interaction between non-native speakers, have become significant in Hungary as well.

### **3 Methods**

#### **3.1 The research questions**

The questions this pilot study aims to answer are as follows:

1. To what extent are students exposed to native and non-native varieties of English in and outside of the classroom?
2. What are students' dispositions towards the English language they learn at school and the English which is used outside of school?
3. What latent dimensions of language learning, use, contact and attitudes affect motivated learning behaviour?

#### **3.2 Participants**

This pilot research is a cross-sectional study that investigated secondary school students in two schools in Budapest. The selection of schools was based on convenience sampling. One of



the schools is an 'elite' selective school in central Budapest. The other institution is an average school both in terms of teaching and student population on the outskirts of the capital. In total 60 students filled in the questionnaire but due to missing data-related problems, that is, questionnaires returned empty, 10 of the students were excluded from the analysis, which yielded an acceptable sample size for a pilot study (Dörnyei, 2007). In total, 35 girls and 15 boys, who were Year 11 (n=14) and Year 12 (n=36) students (i.e., 17 and 18 years old), participated in the study. According to the participants' self-reports and information from the students' teachers, the level of students' proficiency in the investigated sample was between A2 and B1 on the scale of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEF) (Council of Europe, 2001).

### 3.3 Instrument

The Hungarian questionnaire contained 66 questions aimed to measure the following broad topics: English use in and outside of the classroom, various intercultural contact-related notions and language learning motivation. Some of the scales were adapted from earlier studies (Kormos & Csizér, 2008 and Csizér & Kormos, 2009), while others were developed for the purpose of this study. The questions were intended to cover the following latent dimensions with the help of a five-point scale:

- (1) *Motivated learning behaviour* (4 items): students' efforts and persistence in learning English. Example: I do my best to learn to speak English well.
- (2) *Classroom language use: students' roles* (4 items): to what extent students are allowed to initiate learning in class. Example: In English lessons we often discuss language problems raised by students.
- (3) *Indirect contact* (7 items): to what extent students consume various media products. Example: How often do you watch English-speaking films?
- (4) *Direct spoken contact with native speakers* (5 items): how often students speak with native speakers of English. Example: How often do you speak English with native speakers living in your neighbourhood?
- (5) *Direct spoken contact with non-native speakers* (5 items): how often students speak English with non-native speakers. Example: How often do you speak English with non-native speakers living in your neighbourhood?
- (6) *Written contact with native speakers* (3 items): how often students correspond with native speakers of English. Example: How often do you write emails in English to native speakers of English?
- (7) *Written contact with non-native speakers* (3 items): how often students correspond with non-native speakers of English. Example: How often do you write emails in English to non-native speakers of English?
- (8) *Classroom language use: supplementary materials* (4 items): how often teachers or students bring supplementary materials to English classes. Example: In English lessons we often use supplementary materials.
- (9) *Classroom language use: English varieties* (4 items): to what extent teachers use or discuss different English varieties with their students. Example: We compare British, American and other English varieties in English lessons.

- (10) *Noticing* (4 items): to what extent students are aware of the English language around them. Example: When I go shopping, I seek out labels written English so that I can learn English from them.
- (11) *Attitudes towards mistakes in language use outside of school* (4 items): how much English students use outside of school. Example: When I speak English outside of school, mistakes do not matter.
- (12) *Global English* (4 items): students' attitudes towards English as a global language. Example: Learning English enables me to understand people from all over the world.
- (13) *Attitudes towards non-native speakers* (4 items): to what extent students accept non-native speaker use of English. Example: I am of the view that the kind of English non-native speakers use is simpler than the English used by native speakers.
- (14) *Pragmatics* (6 items): what students think of their own pragmatic competence. Example: I know who I can use slang with.
- (15) *Differences in English* (5 items): how students perceive the differences between classroom and everyday English. Example: The kind of English I come across in everyday life is more complex in its vocabulary than the kind of English we learn in class.

Apart from the 66 questions aiming to measure the above latent dimensions, four questions intended to explore the participants personal background directly related to the purpose of the research. The full English version of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix A. The original Hungarian version of the questionnaire can be obtained from the authors.

### 3.4 Procedure

After the items were pooled, the questionnaire was piloted with the help of two think-aloud protocols, which resulted in the rewording of potentially problematic items. The final pilot version of the questionnaire was personally delivered to the secondary schools where a teacher, who had agreed to take charge of the administration of the questionnaires, distributed them among the students and collected the completed questionnaires. The questionnaire was administered in the students' native language.

All the questionnaires were computer-coded and SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) 16.0 was used for analyzing the data. Because the data were normally distributed, parametric procedures were applied. The level of significance was set for  $p < 0.05$  due to the relatively small sample size. Data were checked for normal distribution prior to the analysis.

## 4 Results

### 4.1 The main dimensions of analysis

In order to confirm broader dimensions underlying the variables measured by the questionnaire (Research question 1), we submitted the items belonging to the specific scales to

principal component analysis (PCA; without rotation; Székelyi & Barna, 2002) and the items were also divided into multi-item scales in order to calculate their Cronbach Alpha internal consistency reliability coefficients (Table 1). If the PCA analysis emerged with one component, that is, the hypothesized variables indeed described a single latent dimension and the Cronbach Alpha value reached the .7 threshold, the existence of the given dimension was verified. For the remaining scales subsequent analyses were carried out.

Scales (number of items)	Number of components	Cronbach Alpha
<b>Motivated learning behaviour (5)</b>	1	.87
<b>Classroom language use: students' roles (5)</b>	1	.70
<b>Indirect contact (7)</b>	1	.72
<b>Direct spoken contact with native speakers (5)</b>	1	.75
<b>Direct spoken contact with non-native speakers (5)</b>	1	.72
<b>Written contact with native speakers (3)</b>	1	.75
<b>Written contact with non-native speakers (3)</b>	1	.80
<b>Classroom language use: supplementary materials (4)</b>	2	.04
<b>Classroom language use: English varieties (4)</b>	1	.37
<b>Noticing (4)</b>	2	.47
<b>Attitudes towards mistakes in language use outside of school (4)</b>	1	.69
<b>Global English (4)</b>	2	.59
<b>Attitudes towards non-native speakers (5)</b>	2	-.05
<b>Pragmatics (9)</b>	5	
<b>Differences in English (7)</b>	2	.51

Table 1. The Results of the First Round PCA and the Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficients

As the list of scales in Table 1 indicates, eight dimensions emerged as previously hypothesized: items designed to measure *Motivated learning behaviour*, *Classroom language use (students' roles)*, *Indirect contact*, *Direct spoken contact with both native and non-native speakers of English* and *Written contact again with both native and non-native speakers of English* loaded onto two separate dimensions and the Cronbach Alpha values of these scales were also acceptable. In addition, the scale labelled *Attitudes towards mistakes in language use outside school* obtained a Cronbach Alpha value of .69, which was accepted for the purpose of this pilot study but as the value is bordering on the acceptable threshold, designing further items for the scale might be useful. Another minor point that could be improved for the main study in this respect is that both written contact scales contain only three items and usually the advised number of items on a scales is four (Dörnyei, 2007). We therefore intend to add further items to these scales in the forthcoming study.

The next step in the analysis is to answer the question of how the scales which failed to measure the intended dimension in a reliable way should be improved. Both the PCA and the reliability analysis could indicate problematic items, such as questions contributing too little information to a scale or questions relating negatively to another question (which is not problematic for the PCA but the Cronbach Alpha will be lower for scales with negative items).

Out of the seven scales with unacceptable reliability measures, we managed to improve two to reach an acceptable level of reliability. However, as Table 2 indicates, further fine-tuning is

advisable as, despite the fact that the *Global English* scale has a Cronbach Alpha value of .76, it contains only two items. Hence, further items added to this scale will be necessary in the main study.

Scales (number of items)	Number of components	Cronbach Alpha
<b>Global English (2)</b>	1	.76
<b>Differences in English (4)</b>	1	.71

Table 2. The Results of the Second Round PCA and the Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficients

There remain five dimensions which could not be improved to reach an acceptable level of reliability despite the fact that items with too little information value (*Classroom language use: Supplementary materials, Noticing, Pragmatics*) were deleted or negative items were reversed (*Classroom language use: English varieties*), or both actions were taken (*Attitudes towards non-native speakers*) (Table 3). As this is a pilot study, unreliable scales are informative rather than being a nuisance, and there are several options that can be taken at this point. First, we can simply decide to discard the problematic scales from the main study. However, discarding scales is only advisable if the researcher is convinced that no key features of the domain investigated will be eliminated from the investigation. Second, we could hypothesize why certain dimensions did not work (e.g., students usually do not have supplementary materials in English classes; they do not discuss English varieties in class; the category of ‘non-native speakers of English’ is too broad to yield a one-dimensional attitude scale), and decide to carry out a second quantitative pilot phase and change and/or add items to the unreliable scales in the hope that higher reliability values will be achieved.

Scales (number of items)	Number of components	Cronbach Alpha
<b>Classroom language use: supplementary materials (3)</b>	1	.46
<b>Classroom language use: English varieties (4)</b>	1	.52
<b>Noticing (3)</b>	1	.59
<b>Attitudes towards non-native speakers (3)</b>	1	.58
<b>Pragmatics (5)</b>	1	.64

Table 3. The Results of the Third Round PCA and the Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficients

## 4.2 The analysis of the scales

Table 4 presents descriptive statistics of the scales. For the purpose of this article, we have also decided to provide results on the unreliable scales in order to satisfy our curiosity, but we must draw the attention of our readers to the fact that these data serve only as an illustration and should not be analyzed in the usual way. Our results indicate that students accept the global nature of English (M=4.48), yet their general level of *Motivated learning behaviour* is not particularly high (M=3.70); nevertheless, it is similar to the results of other studies which were carried out in Budapest (see e.g., Kormos & Csizér, 2008). In terms of the contact variables, all the mean values are lower than .30, which indicates that despite the fact that the students in our sample live in the most cosmopolitan region of the country, they do not have much contact with

either native or non-native speakers of English, and their English related attitudes are not high either ( $M=2.98$ ). These results confirm previous findings about the general lack of language contact of Hungarian secondary school students (Csizér & Kormos, 2009).

The absence of contact in the case of students who live in Budapest clearly indicates that neither the recognition of the usefulness of contact, nor the effort to engage in direct or indirect contact come about as by-products of language learning, and students need to be trained to be able to recognise and fully exploit the opportunities presented to them. Teachers can and should play an important role in raising awareness and in the development of learning and communicative strategies which facilitate direct contact with speakers of English.

Scales	Mean value	Standard deviation
<b>Motivated learning behaviour</b>	3.70	.88
<b>Classroom language use: students' roles</b>	3.46	.77
<b>Indirect contact</b>	2.82	.78
<b>Direct spoken contact with native speakers</b>	2.24	.85
<b>Direct spoken contact with non-native speakers</b>	2.39	.80
<b>Written contact with native speakers</b>	1.89	.96
<b>Written contact with non-native speakers</b>	2.00	1.05
<b>Attitudes towards mistakes in language use outside of school</b>	2.89	.85
<b>Global English</b>	4.48	.71
<b>Differences in English</b>	2.98	.87
<i>Classroom language use: supplementary materials</i>	2.22	.69
<i>Classroom language use: English varieties</i>	2.61	.71
<i>Noticing</i>	2.26	.83
<i>Attitudes towards non-native speakers</i>	3.01	.89
<i>Pragmatics</i>	4.03	.64

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of the Investigated Scales  
Notation: italics indicate unreliable scales

Unlike previous studies, we measured contact experience with both native and non-native speakers of English. Although the mean values of the scales measuring contact with non-native speakers are higher than respective scales with native speakers ( $M=2.39$  and  $M=2.00$ ;  $M=2.24$  and  $M=1.89$ ), paired sample t-test results indicated that these differences were statistically not significant. In other words, the general low level of intercultural contact experienced by secondary school students did not corroborate the hypothesis that English is predominantly used for communicating with non-native speakers. Or, these results might also indicate that the dominance of the native speaker as an ideal communication partner still prevails in Hungary.

#### 4.3 The relationships between the scales and the criterion measure

In order to answer the question of what relationships might describe the obtained scales, correlational analyses were conducted. Table 5 presents the significant correlations among the scales (due to the application of the Bonferroni correction procedure, only correlations where  $p<.001$  are reported).

As can be seen in Table 5, the correlation between *Motivated learning behaviour* and the other scales indicates that both *Classroom language use* and outside school contact opportunities have a strong positive relationship with students' learning behaviour, while students' attitudes towards accepting mistakes in everyday speech have a negative relationship with motivated learning behaviour and all the other contact-related scales as well. The fact that these contact-related scales were found to be closely related means that those students who are willing to seek out contact experiences in general will make sure that they engage in as many different contact situations as possible.

Scales	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>1. Motivated learning behaviour</b>	--								
<b>2. Classroom language use: students' roles</b>	.430	--							
<b>3. Indirect contact</b>	.472	.515	--						
<b>4. Direct spoken contact with native speakers</b>		.370	.442	--					
<b>5. Direct spoken contact with non-native speakers</b>	.426	.456	.556	.687	--				
<b>6. Written contact with native speakers</b>			.540	.575	.571	--			
<b>7. Written contact with non-native speakers</b>		.387	.549	.578	.675	.766	--		
<b>8. Attitudes towards mistakes in language use outside of school</b>	-.448	-.476	-.463	-.372	-.403	-.416	-.510	--	
<b>9. Global English</b>									--
<b>10. Differences in English</b>									

Table 5. Significant Correlations ( $p < .05$ ) among the Scales

In order to find out which scales act as predictor variables of students' motivated learning behaviour, multiple regression analyses with a stepwise approach were carried out. The model (Table 5) contains the results concerning the relationship between *Motivated learning behaviour* and the scales which proved to be reliable in the present analysis.

<b>Final model</b>			
<b>Variable</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>SE B</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>
<b>Attitudes towards mistakes in language use outside of school</b>	-.59	.12	-.57*
<b><math>R^2</math></b>			.32

Table 6. Results of the Regression Analysis of the Reliable Scales with Motivated Learning Behaviour as the Criterion Variable. \*  $p < .05$

Table 6 indicates that out of the ten latent dimensions, only one had a significant effect on Motivated learning behaviour, the scale labelled *Attitudes towards mistakes in language use outside of school*. Similar to the correlation analysis, the negative relationship indicates that students who feel that language errors and mistakes are easily overlooked in everyday language use seem to invest less energy into language learning. This, and the fact that the students scored low on the *Differences in English* scale, i.e., that they see everyday English as easy, less complex and uncomplicated, appears to confirm the prevailing fallacy that international English is a simplified, pidginized version of more sophisticated native-speaker varieties. Interestingly, this view is not uncommon in the debate about English as a lingua franca in the literature. Jenkins (2009a, p.150) quotes well-known ELT experts and sociolinguists who refer to ELF as “deficient”, “polluting the standards of native speakers”.

Two issues have to be mentioned at this point to round up the analysis. First, the relatively low level of explanatory power of the model ( $R^2=.32$ ) is due to the fact that the present pilot study did not contain the usually accepted antecedent variables of *Motivated learning behaviour* (Kormos & Csizér, 2008) as the aim was to validate some possible new dimensions. Second, this pilot study also confirms previous results in the sense that contact variables did not have a direct effect on students’ learning behaviour (Csizér & Kormos, 2009).

Another question that remains unanswered at this point is that out of the five unreliable scales, which ones might need improving for the forthcoming main study because of their possible influence on motivated learning behaviour. Based on the results of Table 7, it seems that Noticing is a key notion in explaining students’ *Motivated learning behaviour*, but as its Cronbach Alpha value was only .59, we cannot interpret these results as valid. However, the improved version of the dimension *Noticing* should not be left out of the main study.

<b>Final model</b>			
<b>Variable</b>	B	SE B	$\beta$
<b>Attitudes towards mistakes in language use outside of school</b>	-.52	.12	-.50*
<b>Noticing</b>	.27	.13	.25*
<b><math>R^2</math></b>	.38		

Table 7. Results of the Regression Analysis of the Reliable Scales with Motivated Learning Behaviour as the Criterion Variable. \*  $p < .05$

## 5 Conclusion

Despite its small scale, this study has yielded a number of interesting findings. It supports the results of previous research in that it has confirmed the general lack of contact experiences among Hungarian secondary students. Surprisingly, too, there was no sign of the imbalance between native-involved and non-native only exchanges which is claimed to prevail in worldwide

communication (Seidlhofer, 2004): The Hungarian students in this study reported an equal amount of contact with both types of English language users. In the absence of a wide range of English speaking interlocutors, these learners are thus not forced to learn how to be audience-oriented, how to accommodate and adjust their speech and behaviour to the needs of speakers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In other words, the results suggest that Hungarian learners of English may not have adequate experience of acquiring and/or practising skills which are essential for international communication.

Less motivation and effort can lead to the lowering of target levels which may explain why ‘babbling away’ in a foreign language is tantamount to ‘mastery’ for many Hungarians. The deficiency view of EIL may also cast students in a passive role: if they do not seek and utilize opportunities for contact, despite the high and regular exposure to English, in Budapest in particular, noticing and consequently learning outside of the classroom may not take place. This is where the Dutch may have their competitive edge. They seem to be more open and active to seeking contact experiences outside the language classroom and using English both internationally and intranationally, thereby becoming norm-developing rather than norm-dependent users of English (Kachru, 1992).

The results of EU surveys and the findings of research into Hungarian learners contact experiences also suggest that the current practice of English language teaching in Hungary needs to undergo considerable changes if it intends to prepare learners for the challenges posed by the worldwide use of English. Teachers have to bring the ‘outside’ into the classroom and equip learners with skills that enable them to seize and utilize the learning opportunities presented in out-of-class contexts of language use, and, in particular, the Internet. Students should also develop tolerance towards varieties of English and learn how to cope with the diversity and unpredictability of international communication in English.

As a corollary, the study has also offered an insight into the validation of the questionnaire that has been used to examine student responses in this research. Out of the 15 scales included in the study, only 10 proved to measure issues in a reliable way. The remaining 5 scales need to be reconstructed for the main study as their reliability measures did not reach an acceptable level. Further research into the issues investigated here need to take into account the shortcomings of the present study: the inclusion of only two schools from Budapest and the resulting small sample size. In addition, further qualitative investigations might also yield interesting data into the question of a generally low level of contact of language learners in Hungary as well as dispositions towards and perceived usefulness of English as an international language.

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**APPENDIX A****The English translation of the questionnaire for secondary school students**

Dear Students,

We would like to ask you to participate in our research by answering the following questions about language learning. This questionnaire is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. It is anonymous so you do not have to put down your name. What we are interested in is what you think about the issues raised in the questionnaire. The success of our research depends on how honestly you answer the questions, so please make sure that your answers reflect what you think. We will ensure that nobody from your school has access to the completed questionnaires. Thank you very much for your help.

Éva Illés and Kata Csizér  
(Eötvös Loránd University)

**I. First of all, circle your answers to the questions in each line, depending on how true the statements are of you.**

**5 = very much, 4 = quite, 3 = more or less, 2 = not really, 1 = not at all.**

For example, if you like apples a lot, consommé not really and spinach not at all, your answers should look like this:

How much do you like apples?	5	4	3	2	1
How much do you like consommé?	5	4	3	2	1
How much do you like spinach?	5	4	3	2	1

**5 = very much, 4 = quite, 3 = more or less, 2 = not really, 1 = not at all.**

1. In English lesson we often use supplementary materials.	5	4	3	2	1
2. In English lessons we often discuss language problems raised by students.	5	4	3	2	1
3. When I speak English in the lessons, I have to be very careful not to make any mistakes.	5	4	3	2	1
4. When I walk in the street I deliberately seek out public signs written in English in order to learn new vocabulary.	5	4	3	2	1
5. It is very important for me to learn to speak English very well.	5	4	3	2	1
6. If I spoke English well, I would get to know more people from different (not only English speaking) countries.	5	4	3	2	1
7. Our English teacher mentions varieties of English which do not feature in our books.	5	4	3	2	1
8. Our teacher accepts when we use examples we heard outside of school.	5	4	3	2	1
9. I try to use English outside of school as much as possible.	5	4	3	2	1
10. I use English with non-native speakers more often than with native speakers.	5	4	3	2	1
11. We come across English used by non-native speakers in our lessons.	5	4	3	2	1
12. In English lessons I use expressions which I learnt outside of school.	5	4	3	2	1
13. I do my best to learn to speak English very well.	5	4	3	2	1

14. We can find everything in our books that is necessary to learn to speak English well.	5	4	3	2	1
15. When I go shopping, I seek out labels written in English so that I can learn English from them.	5	4	3	2	1
16. I would like to be able to speak English well so that I can make myself understood by people from different countries.	5	4	3	2	1
17. I am willing to make a lot of effort in order to learn to speak English very well.	5	4	3	2	1
18. In English lessons it is mainly British English that we learn.	5	4	3	2	1
19. In English lessons the teacher explains language problems to us even if they are not related to the material we are learning.	5	4	3	2	1
20. In English lessons we often study materials which are supplied by the students.	5	4	3	2	1
21. In English lessons we often discuss language problems which we have come across outside of school.	5	4	3	2	1
22. Learning English is one of the most important things in my life.	5	4	3	2	1
23. We compare British, American and other varieties in English lessons.	5	4	3	2	1
24. When I watch TV, I look for English speaking channels so that I can improve my language skills.	5	4	3	2	1
25. I do not like the fact that non-native speakers of English often make mistakes when they speak English.	5	4	3	2	1
26. I am determined to learn English.	5	4	3	2	1

**II. Please give your answers between 1-5, depending on how often you use the English language in the following situations.**

**5 = very often, 4 = fairly often, 3 = quite often, 2 = seldom, 1 = never.**

27. How often do you watch English-speaking films?	
28. How often do you read books in English?	
29. How often do you log on to English-speaking websites?	
30. How often do you watch English-speaking programmes on TV?	
31. How often do you read newspapers and magazines written in English?	

**II/A. Please give your answers between 1-5, depending on how often you use the English language in the following situations again, but this time please distinguish whether you use English with a NATIVE or a NON-NATIVE SPEAKER.**

**5 = very often, 4 = fairly often, 3 = quite often, 2 = seldom, 1 = never.**

*Please put a number in both columns.*

	Native speaker	Non-native speaker
32. How often did you speak English when you travelled abroad? (Put 9 if you have never been abroad.)		
33. How often do you speak English with foreigners living in your neighbourhood?		
34. How often do you speak English with foreign friends and acquaintances?		
35. How often did you speak English when you were on holiday in Hungary?		
36. How often do you speak English with adults and children who visit your school from abroad?		
37. How often do you chat in English on the Internet?		
38. How often do you write letters (snail mail) to friends and acquaintances who live abroad?		
39. How often do you write emails in English?		
40. How often do you play online games in English?		

*Have you put a number in both columns? Thank you.*

**III. In the following section there are statements which are true of some people but not of others. We would like to find out to what extent these statements reflect your feelings and circumstances. Please put an X in the box which reflects most truthfully what you think of the statements below. For example, if you like skiing a lot, put an X in the first box:**

	Perfectly true	Quite true	Partly true, partly not	Not really true	Not true at all
I like skiing a lot.	X				

*There are no right or wrong answers – we are interested in your opinion here.*

	Perfectly true	Quite true	Partly true, partly not	Not really true	Not true at all
41. I know how to speak English politely.					
42. I know with whom I have to speak politely.					
43. I know who I can use slang with.					
44. I learn English slang outside of school.					
45. I try my best to speak politely with native speakers.					
46. I do not speak that politely with non-native speakers.					
47. At school we learn how to speak English politely.					
48. At school we learn with whom we have to speak politely.					
49. The kind of English I come across in everyday life is more complex in its vocabulary than the kind of English we learn in class.					
50. The kind of English I come across in everyday life has more complex phrases and idioms than the kind of English we use in the lessons.					
51. The kind of English I come across in everyday life is more complex in its grammar than the kind of English we use in the lessons.					
52. We do not use slang in the English lessons.					
53. The kind of English I come across in everyday life is less polite than the English we use in class.					
54. In the lessons I would like to learn the kind of English I come across in everyday life.					
55. The vocabulary I use in the lessons is different from the vocabulary I come across in everyday life.					
56. The English we use in the lessons is different in its grammar from the grammar of the English I come across in everyday life.					
57. I am of the view that the kind of English non-native speakers use is simpler than the English used by native speakers.					
58. Non-native speakers are easier to understand because of their pronunciation.					
59. A good English lesson is when the teacher supplements the textbook tasks with other materials.					
60. I think I can learn much more English outside of school than in the lessons.					

	Perfectly true	Quite true	Partly true, partly not	Not really true	Not true at all
61. English is one of the most important foreign languages in the world.					
62. Learning English enables me to understand people from all over the world.					
63. When I speak English outside of school, the only thing that matters is that people understand me.					
64. It is difficult to speak with native speakers because it is difficult to understand their accents.					
65. When I speak English outside of school, mistakes do not matter.					
66. It is easier to understand non-native speakers because they do not use as many idioms as native speakers.					

**III. Finally, please provide a few personal details.**

67. Your sex (underline as appropriate): boy girl

68. How old are you? .....

69. What is the level of your knowledge of English? (Underline as appropriate):

beginner            intermediate            advanced

70. Will you take the school-leaving exam in English? (Underline as appropriate).

Yes, at intermediate level            Yes, at advanced level            No