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A Comparative Study of Attitudes and Motivation of Croatian Learners of English and German

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In this comparative longitudinal trend study the authors compare attitudes and motivation of Croatian learners of English and German. Comparisons are made not only with respect to the FL but also to two age points of the learners' language and affective development: end of primary education (age 14) and end of secondary education (age 18). In the study both the quantitative and qualitative research paradigms were employed. Data was gathered by means of a questionnaire consisting of three parts, including both structured and open-ended items. Conclusions are made on the basis of combined quantitative and qualitative results. Implications for further research are offered as well.

Approaches to Motivational Research

L2 attitudes and motivation are perhaps the most researched individual difference variable. We can trace the beginnings of systematic investigation of this learner factor to the 1960s, when results of seminal studies by Gardner and colleagues started to be published. In his overview of the field Dörnyei (2005) distinguishes three phases in motivational research history. The social psychological phase (up to 1990), the cognitive-situated phase (during the 1990s) and the process-oriented phase (last seven years or so). Throughout the decades conceptualisations of motivation became

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more complex as well as more revealing of the variables that should be adopted in the motivational paradigms.

The most recent conceptualisation of L2 motivation (*the L2 Motivational Self System*) was designed by Dörnyei (2005; Csizér & Dörnyei 2005), who builds up his theoretical basis from findings of research into possible and ideal selves carried out in personality psychology. The *L2 Motivational Self System* is defined by three dimensions: *Ideal L2 Self* (wish to learn the L2 because the person we would like to become speaks the language), *Ought-to L2 Self* (wish to possess certain attributes to avoid negative outcomes) and *L2 Learning Experience* (motives connected with the immediate learning environment). The ideal self that the L2 learner wants to achieve is defined as 'agreeable, competent, and successful L2 user' (Csizér & Dörnyei 2005: 30). Dörnyei interprets Gardner's (1985; Gardner & Lambert 1972) concept of integrativeness as some kind of identification within the learner's self-concept. L2 motivation is, then, defined as the L2 learner's wish to reduce the discrepancies between his actual and ideal language selves.

One of the variables that has been shown to play an important role in attitudes and motivation in FL learning is linguistic self-confidence (Clément and Gardner 2001; Clément, Gardner and Smythe 1997; Clément and Kruidenier 1985). It refers to the L2 learner's belief that he is able to perform competently and to achieve learning results. Originally, linguistic self-confidence was envisioned as a socially determined concept based on direct contact between L1 and L2 speakers in multi-ethnic settings. However, it was shown in later studies (e.g., Clément, Dörnyei and Noels 1994) to be also relevant to FL contexts, where direct contact is usually substituted by indirect contact with the L2 language and culture, mostly through the media. The impact of indirect contact can be particularly prominent in case of English, which has turned into a global language.

Research on attributions of success and failure in FL learning (e.g., Ushioda 1998; Williams and Burden 1999; Williams, Burden and Al-Baharna 2001) has highlighted the importance of attributional processes as a motivational factor. Both quantitative and qualitative studies suggest that language learners' perceptions of language learning are influenced by their attributions, and researchers stress the salient value of attributions that enhance language learning motivation. According to Ushioda (1998),

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attributing achievement to internal factors, such as ability or effort, and attributing failure to unstable factors, such as lack of effort, reflect the desirable *positive motivational thinking*. Williams et al. (2001) argue that attributions are, at least partly, related to learners' cultural background.

The immediate learning environment has been recognized as a powerful motivational factor, especially in FL learning contexts, where there is no direct contact with L2 speakers. Mihaljević Djigunović (1991; 1998) found that Croatian EFL learners' perception of teacher competence, as well as their perception of value, utility and interest of their English course correlated positively with the effort they invested in learning English. The teaching setting (including the teacher, methodology and materials) was found to be one of two demotivators among these learners. Nikolov's study (2001) on Hungarian unsuccessful language learners revealed that, in spite of positive attitudes to the L2 and to language learning, they were not successful: their failure was shown to be related to their perception of teaching methodology, especially to the prevailing rote-learning, form-focused activities and inappropriate assessment techniques. Inbar, Donitsa-Schmidt and Shohamy (2001) showed that quality of teaching was the best predictor of Israeli learners' intention to continue learning Arabic in spite of negative attitudes to the target language group. These authors also found that the strength of attitudes and motivation was related to being actively engaged in FL learning.

Attitudes and Motivation for Learning Different Foreign Langaues

Not much research has been done on motivation for learning different FLs in the same socio-educational contexts. In Croatia, attitudes and motivation of young learners of English, French, German and Italian were investigated in an early FL learning longitudinal project. The results pointed to highly positive initial attitudes and to the fact that they can remain very positive under favourable conditions (Mihaljević Djigunović 1993, 1995). Nikolov (1999, 2007) studied attitudes of Hungarian primary learners of English and German and found that learners of both languages

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had positive attitudes to the FL they were learning. However, compared to learners of German, learners of English had more positive attitudes, aimed at higher learning goals and were more successful in learning. Another large scale study in Hungary (Dörnyei, Csizér and Németh 2006) looked into attitudes and motivation of learners of English, French, German, Italian and Russian at the age of 13-14. The findings of this study showed that positive attitudes were related to living close to the border where the FL is spoken (the case of German and Russian), to the tradition the FL had in the region (the case of French) and to the cosmopolitan character of the area (the case of Italian in Budapest). More studies looking into attitudes and motivation for learning different languages are warranted if we want to get a broader insight into motivational issues.

Attitudes and Motivation for Learning English and German in the Croatian Context

Aim of the study

The study was carried out in order to see how learners of two different FLs feel about the respective FL, language learning and themselves as language learners. More specifically, the aims were: 1) to get an insight into attitudes and motivation for learning English and German of Croatian learners at the end of primary and at the end of secondary education, and 2) to compare attitudes and motivation for learning these two FLs in the same socio-educational context.

Sample

A total of 220 Year 8 (age 14) and Year 12 (age 18) learners participated in the study. The 107 Year 8 participants were drawn from 15 primary schools, while the 113 Year 12 participants came from ten secondary schools (both grammar and vocational). Participants were divided into the primary school sample group (I.) and the secondary school sample

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group (II.), which were further subdivided into the primary English sub-sample group (I.E) (N=54), primary German sub-sample group (I.G) (N=53), secondary English (II.E) (N=56) and secondary German (II.G) (N=57) sub-sample groups. The breakdown and characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Breakdown of the sample

		ENGLISH (E)			GERMAN (G)			TOTAL
		Gender		Total	Gender		Total	
		m	f		m	f		
Number of participants	PS (I.)	32 (59.3)	22 (40.7)	**54 (50.47)**	21 (39.6)	32 (60.4)	**53 (49.53)**	**107**
	SS (II.)	17 (30.4)	39 (69.6)	**56 (49.56)**	19 (33.3)	38 (66.7)	**57 (50.44)**	**113**
English/ German grade means	PS (I.)	3.72	4.64	**4.09**	3.9	4.75	**4.42**	**4.25**
	SS (II.)	3.82	4.33	**4.18**	3.47	4.1	**3.89**	**4.04**

PS=primary school; SS=secondary school

As can be seen in Table 1, participants were evenly spread across the sub-sub-samples. The number of male and female participants was fairly even too. Differences in the FL grade between the sub-samples were tested by t-tests. No significant differences were found between the two FL sub-samples in group I. (t=1.788, p>.05) nor in group II. (t=-1.447, p>.05).

Instruments

A three-part questionnaire was used to collect data on participants' attitudes and motivation for learning English/German. The instrument was developed in Hungary and validated in Croatia in an earlier study (Mihaljević Djigunović & Bagarić 2007). The first part of the questionnaire asked for demographic data. The second part comprised 14 statements eliciting participants' attitudes and motivation for learning English/

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German. A five-point Likert-type scale of agreement accompanied each statement. The third part included two open-ended questions asking for an elaborate answer on what participants liked and disliked about their English/German classes.

The questionnaire was first piloted on 120 primary and secondary learners of English/German. Reliability $\acute{\alpha}$ was .86.

Procedure

The questionnaire was administered to three generations of participants in eastern Croatia (the Osijek region). Participants were filling in the questionnaire during their regular FL class.

Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were performed on the collected data. The quantitative analysis was carried out using *SPSS for Windows 11.2*.

Results

Quantitative analyses

Table 2 below shows results of quantitative analyses of data gathered in the second part of the questionnaire. It includes distribution of frequencies, as well as modes and percentages of participants with the particular mode. Results are parallelly shown for English and German. The darker shade denotes potentially significant differences between participants learning English and those learning German in agreeing with a statement, and the lighter shade is used for potentially significant differences between Year 8 and Year 12 participants.

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Table 2. Results of descriptive statistics for the second part of the questionnaire

Variable	Sample		N	Min	Max	M	SD	Mo	Frequency (%)
ITEM 1: I like E/G very much.	I.	E	52	1.00	5.00	4.077	1.026	5*	21 (40.4)
		G	53	1.00	5.00	3.415	1.100	4	19 (35.8)
	II.	E	56	1.00	5.00	4.036	1.044	4	26 (46.4)
		G	57	1.00	5.00	2.842	1.279	2	19 (33.3)
ITEM 2: Knowing E/G is useless to me.	I.	E	52	1.00	4.00	1.346	0.814	1	42 (80.8)
		G	53	1.00	4.00	1.491	0.846	1	36 (67.9)
	II.	E	56	1.00	5.00	1.123	0.574	1	52 (92.9)
		G	57	1.00	5.00	1.877	1.070	1	29 (50.9)
ITEM 3: My parents think it important that I speak E/G.	I.	E	52	1.00	5.00	4.365	1.010	5*	33 (63.5)
		G	53	1.00	5.00	4.057	1.120	5*	28 (52.8)
	II.	E	56	1.00	5.00	4.411	0.910	5*	35 (62.5)
		G	57	1.00	5.00	3.772	1.282	5*	22 (38.6)
ITEM 4: I'm interested in people who speak E/G.	I.	E	51	1.00	5.00	4.137	1.077	5*	24 (47.1)
		G	53	1.00	5.00	3.113	1.266	4*	20 (37.7)
	II.	E	56	2.00	5.00	4.250	0.792	4;5	24 (42.9)
		G	57	1.00	5.00	3.228	1.488	5*	16 (28.1)
ITEM 5: I'm interested in films and pop music in E/G.	I.	E	52	1.00	5.00	4.289	1.091	5*	34 (65.4)
		G	53	1.00	5.00	2.189	1.194	1	19 (35.8)
	II.	E	56	1.00	5.00	4.590	0.804	5	40 (71.4)
		G	57	1.00	5.00	2.333	1.286	1;2	18 (31.6)
ITEM 6: My E/G classes are very boring.	I.	E	52	1.00	5.00	2.327	1.248	1	17 (32.7)
		G	53	1.00	5.00	2.302	1.234	1	18 (34.0)
	II.	E	56	1.00	5.00	2.500	1.096	2	26 (46.4)
		G	56	1.00	5.00	2.536	1.190	3	20 (35.7)
ITEM 7: I have no feeling for this language. I'm a hopeless case for FLs.	I.	E	52	1.00	4.00	1.481	0.852	1	36 (69.2)
		G	53	1.00	4.00	1.547	0.774	1	32 (60.4)
	II.	E	56	1.00	4.00	1.464	0.808	1	39 (69.6)
		G	57	1.00	5.00	1.947	1.156	1	27 (47.4)
ITEM 8: It is easy for me to learn E/G..	I.	E	52	1.00	5.00	4.231	1.022	5*	26 (50.0)
		G	53	1.00	5.00	3.830	1.014	4	24 (45.3)
	II.	E	56	1.00	5.00	4.000	0.809	4	31 (55.4)
		G	57	1.00	5.00	3.000	1.323	4*	16 (28.1)
ITEM 9: I'd need much more effort to be better at E/G.	I.	E	52	1.00	5.00	3.058	1.474	1;4	12 (23.1)
		G	53	1.00	5.00	3.604	1.261	5*	17 (32.1)
	II.	E	55	1.00	5.00	2.709	1.301	2	17 (30.9)
		G	57	1.00	5.00	3.860	1.109	5*	20 (35.1)
ITEM 10: No matter how much I try, I can't achieve better results.	I.	E	51	1.00	5.00	1.529	1.102	1	40 (78.4)
		G	53	1.00	5.00	1.680	0.956	1	30 (56.6)
	II.	E	55	1.00	5.00	1.436	0.811	1	38 (69.1)
		G	57	1.00	5.00	1.737	0.992	1	31 (54.4)
ITEM 11: I use English in my free time.	I.	E	52	1.00	5.00	3.404	1.575	5*	20 (38.5)
		G	53	1.00	5.00	2.340	1.255	1	17 (32.1)
	II.	E	56	1.00	5.00	3.107	1.216	4*	17 (30.4)
		G	57	1.00	5.00	2.035	1.165	1	26 (45.6)

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ITEM 12: I often fail while learning E/G.	**I.**	**E**	52	1.00	4.00	1.731	0.931	1	28 (53.8)
		G	53	1.00	5.00	2.245	1.054	2	18 (34.0)
	II.	**E**	56	1.00	4.00	1.643	0.819	1	29 (51.8)
		G	57	1.00	5.00	2.228	1.165	1	19 (33.3)
ITEM 13: I'm agraid of speaking E/G in class.	**I.**	**E**	51	1.00	5.00	1.745	1.091	1	30 (58.8)
		G	53	1.00	5.00	2.094	1.390	1	28 (52.8)
	II.	**E**	56	1.00	5.00	2.018	1.228	1	27 (48.2)
		G	57	1.00	5.00	2.386	1.320	1	20 (35.1)
ITEM 14: Our E/G textbooks are bad.	**I.**	**E**	51	1.00	5.00	2.176	1.228	1	21 (41.2)
		G	53	1.00	5.00	2.208	1.183	1	18 (34.0)
	II.	**E**	56	1.00	5.00	2.786	1.039	3	24 (42.9)
		G	57	1.00	5.00	3.404	1.208	3	20 (35.1)

**Mode is higher than mean*

Results of descriptive statistical analyses presented above suggest there might be differences in attitudes and motivation for learning English and German among Croatian learners. In order to find out which of the differences are significant we performed independent samples t-tests. Results are presented in Table 3.

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Table 3. Significance of differences: results of independent samples t-tests

Variable	Compared groups		N	M	SD	t	Sig.
ITEM 1: I like E/G very much.	I.	E	52	4.077	1.026	3.187	**.002****
		G	53	3.415	1.100		
	II.	E	56	4.036	1.044	5.440	**.000****
		G	57	2.842	1.279		
ITEM 2: Knowing E/G is useless to me.	I.	E	52	1.346	0.814	-.891	.375
		G	53	1.491	0.846		
	II.	E	56	1.123	0.574	-4.667	**.000****
		G	57	1.877	1.070		
ITEM 3: My parents think it important that I speak E/G.	I.	E	52	4.365	1.010	1.425	.157
		G	53	4.057	1.120		
	II.	E	56	4.411	0.910	3.058	**.003****
		G	57	3.772	1.282		
ITEM 4: I'm interested in people who speak E/G.	I.	E	51	4.137	1.077	4.448	**.000****
		G	53	3.113	1.266		
	II.	E	56	4.250	0.792	4.567	**.000****
		G	57	3.228	1.488		
ITEM 5: I'm interested in films and pop music in E/G.	I.	E	52	4.289	1.091	9.404	**.000****
		G	53	2.189	1.194		
	II.	E	56	4.590	0.804	11.200	**.000****
		G	57	2.333	1.286		
ITEM 6: My E/G classes are very boring.	I.	E	52	2.327	1.248	.103	.918
		G	53	2.302	1.234		
	II.	E	56	2.500	1.096	-.165	.869
		G	56	2.536	1.190		
ITEM 7: I have no feeling for this language. I'm a hopeless case for FLs.	I.	E	52	1.481	0.852	-.418	.677
		G	53	1.547	0.774		
	II.	E	56	1.464	0.808	-2.578	**.011***
		G	57	1.947	1.156		
ITEM 8: It is easy for me to learn E/G..	I.	E	52	4.231	1.022	2.016	**.046***
		G	53	3.830	1.014		
	II.	E	56	4.000	0.809	4.857	**.000****
		G	57	3.000	1.323		
ITEM 9: I'd need much more effort to be better at E/G.	I.	E	52	3.058	1.474	-2.041	**.044***
		G	53	3.604	1.261		
	II.	E	55	2.709	1.301	-5.044	**.000****
		G	57	3.860	1.109		
ITEM 10: No matter how much I try, I can't achieve better results.	I.	E	51	1.529	1.102	-.741	.460
		G	53	1.680	0.956		
	II.	E	55	1.436	0.811	-1.752	.083
		G	57	1.737	0.992		
ITEM 11: I use English in my free time.	I.	E	52	3.404	1.575	3.825	**.000****
		G	53	2.340	1.255		
	II.	E	56	3.107	1.216	4.756	**.000****
		G	57	2.035	1.165		

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ITEM 12: I often fail while learning E/G.	**I.**	**E**	52	1.731	0.931	-2.648	**.009****
		G	53	2.245	1.054		
	II.	**E**	56	1.643	0.819	-3.094	**.003****
		G	57	2.228	1.165		
ITEM 13: I'm agraid of speaking E/G in class.	**I.**	**E**	51	1.745	1.091	-1.427	.157
		G	53	2.094	1.390		
	II.	**E**	56	2.018	1.228	-1.534	.128
		G	57	2.386	1.320		
ITEM 14: Our E/G textbooks are bad.	**I.**	**E**	51	2.176	1.228	-.131	.896
		G	53	2.208	1.183		
	II.	**E**	56	2.786	1.039	-2.912	**.004****
		G	57	3.404	1.208		
TOTAL	**I.**	**E**	54	54.685	13.718	2.227	**.028***
		G	53	49.774	8.425		
	II.	**E**	56	56.571	7.027	7.093	**.000****
		G	57	45.175	9.844		

*p<0.05
**p<0.01

As results in Table 3 show, significant differences between the sub-samples (I.E:I.G & II.E:II.G) were found with respect to how much participants liked the FL they were learning (ITEM 1), how interested they were in people speaking the respective FL (ITEM 4), how interested they were in films and pop music in their FL (ITEM 5), how easy they found their FL (ITEM 8), how much attention they devoted to the FL in their free time (ITEM 11), and in their estimation of how much effort they needed to put into learning the FL (ITEM 9). Year 12 English language learners, significantly differently from their German counterparts, viewed the usefulness of their FL (ITEM 2), their parents' perception of the importance of the FL they were learning (ITEM 3), own language learning aptitude (ITEM 7) and quality of teaching materials (ITEM 14).

We were also interested in whether motivation changed with years of study. Therefore, we performed another set of t-tests. This time we checked differences in mean values between Year 8 and Year 12 participants. As results presented in Table 4 indicate, statistically significant differences were found mainly between Year 8 and Year 12 learners of German in Items 1, 2, 7, 8, 14 and the total score. English-learning participants in Year 8 and Year 12 significantly differed only in ITEM 14.

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Table 4. Significance of differences by age: results of t-tests

Variable	Compared groups			
	I.E : II. E		*I.G : II.G*	
	t	Sig.	t	Sig.
ITEM 1: I like E/G very much.	.207	.837	2.511	**.014***
ITEM 2: Knowing E/G is useless to me.	1.621	.109	-2.109	**.037***
ITEM 3: My parents think it important that I speak E/G.	-.245	.807	1.200	.233
ITEM 4: I'm interested in people who speak E/G.	-.620	.536	-.434	.665
ITEM 5: I'm interested in films and pop music in E/G.	-1.621	.108	-.610	.543
ITEM 6: My E/G classes are very boring.	-.767	.445	-1.007	.316
ITEM 7: I have no feeling for this language. I'm a hopeless case for FLs.	.103	.918	-2.147	**.034***
ITEM 8: It is easy for me to learn E/G.	1.295	.198	3.709	**.000****
ITEM 9: I'd need much more effort to be better at E/G.	1.299	.197	-1.132	.260
ITEM 10: No matter how much I try, I can't achieve better results.	.498	.620	-.310	.757
ITEM 11: I use English in my free time.	1.090	.279	1.312	.192
ITEM 12: I often fail while learning E/G.	.522	.603	.081	.936
ITEM 13: I'm agraid of speaking E/G in class.	-1.209	.229	-1.129	.262
ITEM 14: Our E/G textbooks are bad.	-2.778	**.006****	-5.241	**.000****
TOTAL	-.903	.369	2.623	**.010****

*p<0.05
**p<0.01

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Qualitative analyses

In the third part of the questionnaire participants elaborated on the positive and negative aspects of the teaching of English/German they were exposed to. They were focused on the following factors of the teaching process: teacher, language, teaching content, teaching methodology and teaching materials. They, spontaneously, also contemplated on the FL in general and possibilities of using it in real life. Those answers that did not fit into any of the listed categories were put into two extra ones.

In the following paragraphs we focus on similarities and differences in participants' perceptions of the different aspects of their immediate FL teaching environment based on their reports in the third part of the questionnaire.

Teacher

Both English and German primary school participants were generally satisfied with their FL teacher. They particularly valued teachers with good personal characteristics (approachable, good-hearted, hardworking, having a sense of humour, showing a genuine interest in learners, etc.) and with good educational skills (establishing a rapport with learners, motivating learners, paying attention to all learners, etc.). In terms of the teacher's didactic competences primary participants stressed particularly the importance of clear explanations. Secondary school participants emphasized the teacher's language and didactic competences, such as being able to present the language material well and using innovative approaches in language teaching. Some, assumingly less successful participants, wished their teachers would devote more attention to them, as well as to talk to them more and help them more.

Teaching content

Irrespective of the language they were learning or of length of study, participants considered as good those topics that could stimulate their interest. Some especially pointed out the importance of dealing with

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content related to culture and civilization of the countries whose language they were learning.

Grammatical content was described by many as unappealing. Learners of German thought that too much grammar was included in their curriculum and found articles and declinations especially troublesome. Learners of English complained about tenses. Generally, participants perceived grammatical content as abstract, complicated, difficult and boring but thought that grammar teaching could be made more interesting and understandable. In comparison with learners of English, learners of German found the choice of textbook texts and vocabulary less satisfactory. This also applies to the selection of vocabulary to be learned in German. Texts were perceived as removed from learners' interests. Secondary school learners of German thought also that their texts were too long, full of unimportant information and useless vocabulary. Some primary learners of German, however, stressed the need for a larger vocabulary. Some learners of German commented that acquisition of both grammar and vocabulary would be much easier if they were exposed to and had the opportunity to use German out-of-school. As regards the amount of content, learners of German felt that too much content was covered too quickly, while some (mostly successful) learners of English wished for more new content and disliked focusing on familiar things and dwelling too long on unimportant details.

Teaching

Participants of both languages and from both age groups commented that teaching should not rely only on the textbook and the procedures suggested in teachers' guidebooks. They valued creative approaches to teaching that imply motivating teaching strategies different from 'traditional' ones. Apart from alternative ways of teaching, learners of German also insisted on such teaching methods that would make 'difficult' language material simpler and more manageable to learn. Like learners of English, they disliked a purely 'cognitive' approach, i.e. learning only facts and rules, and favoured a more communicative approach based on natural language use. Such approach, they claimed, starts from examples

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of authentic language use and offers opportunities for purposeful and natural communication in the FL. Expression of personal meanings, either when answering questions or through discussion, featured high on their list of desirable classroom activities.

Participants from all sub-samples equally liked group work but stressed that they did not like working in too large groups. Songs, games, role-plays and project work were favourites among all participants. Learner-centred activities were particularly emphasized as desirable by learners of German.

All participants stressed the importance of listening and reading activities, but primary school learners insisted that pronunciation and vocabulary exercises were highly important too.

Oral tests were generally unpopular, just like writing grammar-focused tests and dictations, or frequent quick, short assessments. Interestingly, some participants, probably those with high writing aptitude, liked 'schoolworks' – major written tests usually requiring either writing compositions or answering questions. Some, on the other hand, preferred oral interviews as long as they were not focused on grammar.

Vocational school learners disliked frequent reading, translation of texts and dealing with grammar. Their reports suggest that the grammar-translation method is still common in FL classes in this type of schools.

Participants from all groups reported liking listening to texts and watching films without subtitles provided.

Teaching materials

Most learners of English, especially those in Year 8, had no complaints about their textbooks; some even stressed that they liked them very much. Only some disliked particular texts but even such participants considered the textbook as a whole good and interesting. Learners of German, however, thought that textbook topics were outdated, that tasks were unimaginative and not useful enough. One of the interesting observations they also made related to learner autonomy: they complained that some textbooks did not contain enough explanatory input on grammar and vocabulary for independent learning. They claimed that, due to this, the

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teacher had to use up too much class time on elaborate explanations. Some secondary learners of German went so far as to claim that textbooks were, in fact, totally useless. Vocational school learners were particularly critical of their textbooks: they found texts too long to manage and too inadequate to help develop communicative competence. All participants appreciated additional teaching materials, but this was especially salient in reports by learners of German.

Language

Learners of German were divided in their opinions about liking this FL. Some liked it, others did not know whether they did, or considered it a 'hard' language that is not easily picked up. Participants learning English liked the language. In contrast to their German-learning counterparts, their positive feelings towards their FL did not decrease with length of study.

Language knowledge and language use

It is interesting to note that all participants, regardless of the language they were learning, considered knowing the FL very useful. Learners of German stressed the importance of knowledge of German in the field of economics, while learners of English believed that English could be useful in all areas of life and work. Some primary school learners of German pointed out that the knowledge they acquired in school was not good enough to use it for communication; some reported being discouraged by low school grades in German.

General comments

Learners of English, generally speaking, liked everything connected with the English language and with English classes. Primary school learners of German were also, generally, satisfied. Secondary school learners of German, however, very rarely reported liking everything. Still, an equally small number of such learners said that they liked nothing.

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Other

Some participants considered the number of hours of the FL too low, others too high. Since the latter came from specific schools, a possible conclusion is that their opinion was connected to the quality of teaching they were exposed to.

Discussion

Our quantitative and qualitative data analyses show that learners of English and learners of German in our samples differed in their attitudes and motivation. They also indicate that their attitudes and motivation changed over time. However, significant changes occurred mostly in case of learners of German: unfortunately, these changes showed a negative trend, i.e. motivation for learning German decreased from Year 8 to Year 12, reflecting a lowering of linguistic self-confidence. Of particular relevance to attitudes and motivation are, in our opinion, the less positive linguistic self-confidence and the less desirable attributional pattern (evidenced in Items 7 and 8) found in Year 12 learners of German in comparison not only to learners of English but also to Year 8 learners of German,

These findings raise the issue of why learners had different motivation for learning the two FLs. We would like to suggest that the explanations lie in relatively different immediate learning environments as well as out-of-school language learning contexts. We will first discuss the potential impact of out-of-school language learning contexts on learner attitudes and motivation.

In the Croatian educational context both English and German are formally treated as FLs. However, if we take into consideration everyday exposure to these languages, we can see that they differ essentially in their status (Cindrić & Narančić Kovač 2005; Narančić Kovač & Cindrić 2007) and conditions of learning. As Cohen (1994) warns, the so-called FL context includes so many different approaches to the target language that it can sometimes operate as a second language context too. In Croatia this seems to be true about English. It has lately been considered a language

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of international communication, and has, in some respects, come close to being a second language. This is a consequence of its increasing presence in the media (TV, radio, press, internet, etc.). In her study on Croatian EFL learners' motivation during the late 1980s, Mihaljević (1990) found that many of her participants saw English as a means of becoming 'part of the world': she called this the 'affiliation' motive to distinguish it from the integrative motive. Dörnyei (2005) suggests that, in case of English, motivation for learning can be explained in terms of metaphorical identification with what it stands for as an undisputed world language: the globalized world citizen identity. Similar interpretations were made by Nakata (1995) and Yashima (2000). Arnett (2002) claims that, due to globalization, most people nowadays develop a bicultural identity that is rooted in both local and global cultures. It seems to us that these new developments in conceptualising L2 motivation can explain the differences between Croatian learners of English and of German in their attitudes and motivation for learning the two languages.

Out-of-class exposure to English enables learners of English, in contrast to learners of German, to acquire it unconsciously too (Mihaljević Djigunović & Geld 2003). This has been confirmed by studies on language awareness of Croatian learners of English and German (Bagarić 2001). Exposure to a language, in our opinion, also stimulates automatic language production. Thus, learners often acquire English through authentic, not simulated, language use as is generally not the case with German. Automatised, unconscious production results in a feeling of success, which is one of the most significant factors contributing to an increase and maintenance of motivation for further language learning (Bagarić 2003).

Exposure to English stimulates planned out-of-class use of English (see Table 3). In our study, in contrast to learners of German, learners of English in both Year 8 and Year 12 liked the language they were learning more, had a feeling it was easier to learn, and needed to put in less effort to achieve good results. Although many claim that this may be so because English grammar is quite simple, we believe that such positive attitudes should be ascribed to exposure and intensive unconscious use of English. This is confirmed by participants in our study: learners of both languages equally complained that grammar was difficult. Also, learners of English

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at both levels found learning English purposeful because, they reported, they could use it in everyday life. While learners of German were also aware of usefulness of German, at higher levels the general pragmatic-communicative orientations changed to work-related orientations. Since motivation for learning German decreased with years of study (see Table 4), it could be concluded that it either waned or obtained a completely instrumental and extrinsic character. Extrinsic motivation in case of learners of German can also be seen from the reports on the high value their parents attributed to learning this language.

The teaching process can also be considered as a contributor to the differences in attitudes and motivation for learning English and German. Since we did not analyze the teaching context but conclude about it on the basis of participants' reports in the questionnaire, we need to forewarn about the explicative strength of our conclusions. Still, let us mention some indicative trends related to the teaching of these languages. It can be easily concluded from reports by learners of both languages that the teaching process did not motivate them enough to use the language. They appreciated oral communication, both with the teacher and classmates, but wished for far more opportunities for expressing their opinions, for discussions etc. in the FL. This shows that not only theoreticians but also learners themselves are aware of the importance of language output. Language output enables contextualized and purposeful language use. Apart from that, and more importantly, it enables learners to test their hypotheses about the target language (Swain 1995). Language output stimulates noticing which leads to understanding (Schmidt, 1994). It can be seen that language output is important to learners of both languages, but it is even more important to learners of German as they have fewer opportunities to use it out-of-class. For these learners language input is crucial too, but it needs to be comprehensible, as pointed out by Krashen (1981) and Krashen and Terrell (1983). Complaints by learners of German about having to learn words they saw no use for, of dealing with too long and too difficult texts indicate that the language input they were exposed to got increasingly less comprehensible. Incomprehensible input can have a detrimental effect on language learning and use. Since the status of German as well as its learning context do not boost learner motivation,

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it is not surprising that creative and stimulating approaches to teaching were high priority on the wish list of learners of this language.

Another line of interpreting differences in motivation for learning English and German can be found in what Dörnyei and Csizér (2002) call a two-tier approach to L2 motivation. This approach distinguishes between motivation for world-language-learning and motivation for non-world-language-learning. New developments in motivational reseach, such as those referring to *L2 Motivational Self System* (Dörnyei 2005), may be more explanatory of motivation for learning a global, world language like English than of motivation for learning a language like German. This line of thought is still in its infancy as more research is needed to find out if it takes us in the right direction.

Conclusion

Results of this study suggest that learners of English, compared to learners of German, have more positive attitudes, especially at higher levels of learning. Consequently, their motivation is higher too. Motivation for learning German as a FL decreases with years of study. The main reasons for this, in our opinion, are related to the immediate learning environment, the different status of the two languages and to out-of-class exposure to the languages.

We believe that future research should concentrate on the impact of the learning context on attitudes and motivation of learners of English and German. It would probably be very revealing if special attention were paid to fluctuations in motivation and to possible causes of motivational changes. This calls for longitudinal research with large samples. Both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms would be warranted as attitudes and motivation are a highly complex individual learner variable.

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KOMPARATIVNO ISTRAŽIVANJE STAVOVA I MOTIVACIJE HRVATSKIH UČENIKA ENGLESKOGA I NJEMAČKOG JEZIKA

U svojoj longitudinalnoj komparativnoj studiji autorice uspoređuju stavove i motivaciju hrvatskih učenika engleskoga i njemačkog jezika. Usporedbe provode s obzirom na jezik ali i stupanj jezičnoga i afektivnog razvoja učenika uključujući učenike osmoga razreda osnovne škole i završnoga razreda srednje škole. U istraživanju se služe i kvantitativnim i kvalitativnim pristupom. Podatke su prikupile upitnikom kojeg je dio bio strukturiran a dio nestrukturiran. Zaključke formiraju na temelju kvantitativnih i kvalitativnih rezultata, a donose i implikacije svojih nalaza za buduća istraživanja.

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Key words: attitudes, motivation, English as a foreign language, German as a foreign language, linguistic self-confidence

Ključne riječi: stavovi, motivacija, engleski kao strani jezik, njemački kao strani jezik, jezično samopouzdanje

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