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EERA Network: **31. LEd – Network on Language and Education**
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Motivation and Achievement in English as a Foreign Language

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Proposal Information

With the increased importance of English as a lingua franca increases the cost of not speaking English (Education First, 2018). The learning and instruction of English as a foreign language (EFL) is of growing importance in all educational systems and English became a compulsory language in most of the European countries.

Motivation is a key factor connected with successful EFL learning and is a central focus of the current research (Boo et al., 2015; Lamb, 2017). Motivation studies repeatedly show the connection of motivation to acquired EFL skills (Khodadady & Khajavy, 2013; Pae, 2008). They show that motivation differs based on gender, age, school type, and across countries (e.g., You & Dörnyei, 2016).

From the fifties until the beginning of the nineties, the motivation research was based on Gardner's socio-educational model of second language acquisition. According to this model, most of the learning outcomes were connected with the integrative motive (Gardner et al., 1976). In the nineties, cognitive theories were applied, e.g. self-determination theory differentiating between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Noels et al., 2000). Later, the focus shifted to contextual and dynamic aspects of motivation (Boo et al., 2015) and to the process model of EFL motivation (Dörnyei, 2005). Afterwards, L2 motivational self system, currently dominating EFL motivation theory, was introduced (Boo et al., 2015; Dörnyei, 2009).

In the Czech Republic, the most widely used theory of achievement motivation (Hrabal & Pavelkova, 2010) is based on distinguishing between the need for achievement (NfA) and the need to avoid failure (NtAF). The identification of the level of student achievement motivation in EFL and its relationship to their grades and other indicators of achievement is an important research task. However, findings for Czech students are scarce (Vlčková et al., 2014). Our study fills this gap by analysing the level of students' achievement motivation in EFL and its relationship to their grades and aspiration.

Methodology or Methods/ Research Instruments or Sources Used

The sample was constructed by using the probability sampling of lower secondary schools in the Czech region of South Moravia and consisted of 26 schools (i.e., 25 of 9th grade classes, 462 students). In this analysis, 324 students were included (172 female) according to the analysed variables.

The Achievement Motivation Questionnaire (Hrabal & Pavelková, 2010) was used, measuring NfA (7 items) and NtAF (7 items) on a 5-point response scale. Examples of items: When I should be examined, I am anxious (NtAF); I want to have good marks in English (NfA).

The reported grade in English, receiving a final report card with honours, and aspiration to study at an upper secondary comprehensive school were measured by a questionnaire and analysed as dummy variables.

Data analysis included logistic regression models computed in software R (glm function with probit specification).

Conclusions, Expected Outcomes or Findings

The need for achievement (NfA) in EFL was found to be a positive predictor and the need to avoid failure (NtAF) was found to be a negative predictor of student final grade in English, receiving a final report card with honours, and aspiration to study at an upper secondary comprehensive school. The effect of NfA on all three variables was, on average, lower for males than for females, and the effect of NtAF for males was, on average, higher.

In accordance with previous studies (Khodadady & Khajavy, 2013; Pae, 2008), our findings confirm the relation between reported motivation in EFL and English achievement. Also, previous studies conclude that domain-specific instruments predict indicators of achievement in particular domains better than domain-general instruments (Michel et al., 2020). Our instrument measuring NfA and NtAF was successfully predicting not only English achievement, but also general learning achievement (i.e. receiving a final report card with honours) and aspiration to study at an elite upper secondary comprehensive school. Our further research will consider the scale usage differences among students by using the anchoring vignette method.

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