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„Social media technologies in the language classroom. How peer learning websites affect motivation.“

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1 Introduction

Computer technologies and the internet have led the world into a completely new era. Life without a computer is unimaginable for a large number of people anymore. Technologies have made their way into the world of work and the private sphere of people, but they have also entered the educational system. Language teaching nowadays often goes hand in hand with learning software, computer programs, or the internet, which offer a variety of possibilities for language learning.

Within the field of the internet, social media technologies have encountered great popularity and success, especially referring to social networking sites, file sharing services, and communication tools. Thus, the driving force behind this research is to find out what motivates people to invest a large amount of their time in social media and how this kind of motivation can be used for the purpose of language learning. More precisely, the general questions have been narrowed down to more specific questions concerning only a small part within the field of social media; namely peer-learning platforms.

Thus, the purpose of this thesis is to find out about the motivational aspects of users of a peer learning platform. For this research *Livemocha* has been chosen in a case study focusing on the effects such a platform has on motivation of learners in terms of effort, persistence and motives of usage, and further if learners actually succeed in reaching their learning goals. Subsequently, the outcomes and results of the study are used to analyze how peer learning websites can be used in a language classroom of a school setting in order to increase motivation.

The study touches the academic fields of computer-assisted language learning (CALL), social media, and motivation, which will serve as the theoretical framework for the research. Hence, in the first part of this thesis, the approach of CALL will be introduced as a form of language learning, how it developed and how it influences recent teaching methodology. Furthermore, potentials for the language classroom will be discussed in detail in order to show the importance of CALL. The next section talks about social media or web 2.0 explaining the

success and functions of the way the internet connects users via platforms, and involves them in the process of creating the content of a website (Alby 2008: 15). A third important point on which the study is based is motivational theory. Findings of different motivation researches are laid out as a foundation for the empirical study. Most importantly, the socio-educational model of Gardner (2006) will be explained, because the Attitude and Motivation Test Battery (Gardner 2004) serves as a reference for items of the questionnaire, as well as items from Dörnyei's L2 motivational self system (2005).

The next big part introduces the empirical research. A questionnaire consulting users of the website was put together to find out about their motivation and was questioning them about their perception of motivation and their reasons for using *Livemocha*. The results were then quantitatively analyzed and evaluated, and interpreted as regards whether peer learning platforms are motivating and can be implemented in language learning classrooms of a school setting.

2 Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

In this chapter computer-assisted language learning is explained in more detail; what it is, where it can be found, what different kinds of CALL exist, what technologies it includes, how it can be useful in the classroom, how it may affect learning negatively and why it is important for language learning in general. Moreover, a brief historical overview of the development of CALL is presented in order to give insight of how fast this field has grown and how important it is in English Language Teaching (ELT).

2.1 Definition

It seems to be a difficult undertaking to pin down an exact definition of computer-assisted language learning (CALL). Looking at previous research and literature, there is evidence that shows that the research field of CALL is multi-

faceted. A fairly old definition comes from Levy (1997: 1): “[T]he search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning.” However, there are different opinions on this definition. Recently, CALL has been criticized for laying too much emphasis on computers only as opposed to other kinds of technology (Heim & Ritter 2012: 11). For Egbert (2005: 4) CALL means “learners learning language in any context with, through, and around computer technologies”. This is a more appropriate definition, because it also includes other technological devices and software that can be used for learning. Furthermore, it stresses the learning input that is not directly related to the work at the computer, but it also takes into account learning that is indirectly supported by computer technologies. Attempts to use technology enhanced language learning (TELL) as an alternative description of the field have been made; however, this abbreviation is less common and rarely found in the literature. Another term which is frequently used in the CALL-area, particularly when it comes to the school context is blended learning. The term refers to a language course which combines a face-to-face classroom component with the use of technology (Sharma & Barrett 2009: 7). In this paper however, the term CALL will be used to refer to teaching and learning a language with different kinds of technologies.

CALL can in fact include all presently available forms of technology apart from the computer; for example, technological appliances ranging from laptops, netbooks, cell phones, or smart phones to digital projectors, interactive whiteboards and many more. The term online communication can also be included into the CALL-area regardless of written or oral communication, but Heim and Ritter (2012: 20-42) distinguish between asynchronous and synchronous writing and speaking. Asynchronous writing means that the recipient does not read the text at the time of writing and does not need to reply instantly, which includes e-mails, forums, and discussion boards. It is opposed to synchronous writing or also real time conversation, where the recipient reads the text immediately while writing and has to react right away; a chat would be an instance of synchronous writing. Likewise, the same thing applies to spoken online communication. Asynchronous spoken conversation features voicemail or podcasts and synchronous spoken conversation can take place in audio and video conferencing with tools like Skype.

Furthermore, online learning material or web resources are part of CALL. This includes all forms of material downloaded from the internet, but also offline learning software. Additionally, websites such as web portals (i.e. websites that serve as an entry to a number of pages or applications on a specific topic; e.g. *bbc.co.uk*¹), reference tools like online dictionaries, thesauri, translation tools, search engines as *google.com*, online encyclopedias, and learning management systems or learning platforms like *Moodle* count to the field of CALL. One of the most important tools that can be used for CALL is social media or social software, which “enables users of the web to interact with each other, to co-construct meaning and to produce as well as view materials online” (Heim & Ritter 2012: 142). More information on this topic will be discussed in the next chapter.

Apart from technology and computer science, which is the key dimension and the reason why CALL exists, there are three more pillars according to Heim and Ritter (2012: 12) that make up the foundation of CALL and English language teaching (ELT) more generally; namely, language education/English language teaching, applied linguistics and pedagogy. It can be concluded from this point of view that CALL presents itself as a heterogeneous field. Consequently, English teachers need to be competent in four main areas in order to provide a successful setting for CALL. On the one hand, it seems to be a challenging task to be proficient in all those areas, especially because the field of computer science is developing and changing very fast which makes it difficult to keep up to date with every single tool or website that is available. On the other hand, it is probably safe to say that it is not possible anymore for a teacher to restrain from modern technology completely. However, the computer in CALL should not be viewed as the end itself, but is rather supposed to act as a tool to improve language learning (Warschauer in Egerbert 2010: 48).

2.2 History

Historical facts found in this chapter are, unless stated otherwise, based on Heim and Ritter’s historical overview (2012: 11-16).

¹ Websites and web applications will be indicated in italics and listed in the bibliography.

Generally, CALL only looks back to a relatively short history. The actual beginning of CALL can be defined with the personal computer becoming widely affordable to the public, which was about 30 years ago. Since then, it has revolutionized everyday life and simultaneously the educational world. Before that, there has been a prehistory starting in the 1960s, which was restricted to studies in computer laboratories at universities. Those studies, e.g. the PLATO study (Programmed Logic for Automatic Teaching Operations), were carried out with the first computers available trying to find out what made computers interesting for language learning, but also other subjects. PLATO acted as one of the first communication facilities between users who were simultaneously signed in (Levy 1997: 15-16).

2.2.1 Behavioristic CALL

PLATO was based on a drill-and-practice pattern following the behaviorist approach of Skinner's influential book *Verbal Behavior* (1957). Language was said to be learned by stimulus, response, and reinforcement often realized in language laboratories, where people had to listen and repeat and learn a language by habit-formation (Levy 1997: 16). The methods used in the PLATO program were mainly question-answer sheets using gap-filling exercises. Those drill and practice exercises were also easily programmable and met the limited technological resources that were available at that time. Grammar, vocabulary, reading, and writing were considered in the first PLATO programs. Over the years it was further developed and extended, but it was never able to provide functions for the skill of speaking. Additionally, the computer as a tutor had a controversial reputation and was doubted to have an educational value.

Overall, the available computer applications until the 1970s were not very satisfying for learners' needs. The real success for CALL started later. After PLATO, the first personal computer, the IBM PC, was issued in 1981 and the first Apple Macintosh came out in 1984. Their launch on the market was followed by the first genuine CALL software, which was still programmed mainly in a drill-and-practice style; however, there were initial attempts to move towards a more communicative approach.

2.2.2 Communicative CALL

The first communicative strategies that were included in language learning software were text-based simulations or games. They were very simple and it was not a strict drill-and-practice pattern anymore. The computer took over two roles, the one as a tutor and the other as a tool. It was able to give immediate feedback to exercises and offered guided teaching. Furthermore, its functions became more elaborate as editing texts, using databases and looking up vocabulary.

The most crucial innovations to make CALL more communicative happened in the 1990s. Computers were able to handle images and audio files, which brought up several new opportunities. Furthermore, the emergence of the world wide web was the driving force in CALL development. It was even more overwhelming than language software, and online communication such as e-mails were a big leap forward.

The appearance of social media made the internet even more attractive for CALL. Social networks were built up, language learning materials became available everywhere on the net and more complex forms of online communication such as video calls or voice mails brought up completely new perspectives. In the last years, the development continued to move towards wireless connectivity everywhere and increased mobility due to smaller and faster pocket-size devices like netbooks and smartphones.

2.2.3 Integrated CALL

Considering the fast development in the last 50 years, we might predict even more changes and opportunities for CALL in the future. Up to now, experience and expertise have increased in this field. The goal for CALL according to Bax (2003: 24) is to be able to apply the concept of “normalization”, which

refers to the stage when the technology becomes invisible, embedded in everyday practice and hence ‘normalised’. To take some commonplace examples, a wristwatch, a pen, shoes, writing – these

are all technologies which have become normalized to the extent that we hardly recognize them as technologies.

For Heim and Ritter (2012) this is not the case yet. They are referring to German schools; however when looking at the Austrian system, no standard normalization can be found here either. CALL is not completely integrated in school systems, because there are no general legal guidelines in the curriculum and because of the lack of equipment and know-how of teachers. At least, this is not the case in all areas, even though the use of text processing programs or the like might be seen as “normal” already.

Normalizing CALL and therefore moving to the stage Bax (2003) calls “integrated CALL” still takes time. Nonetheless, it is questionable if computer technologies can be normalized in such a way that they are not noticed as technologies anymore. It also seems unrealistic taking into account the limited financial resources of schools or the fast development of technology. The change of applications, devices and software adapting to what becomes possible is not only a challenge for research, but also for integrating it in the language classroom. Teachers have to try make use of available media as well as possible, even though it has not yet reached a normalization standard, and they need to do further training in order to keep up with the pace of technology.

2.3 Why using or not using CALL?

This section gives information about some of the advantages and disadvantages of CALL. It makes clear what potentials there are to make full use of technology in the classroom and additionally to improve language learning. However, it also presents the problems it entails and teachers need to be aware of.

2.3.1 Potentials

To start at one point of the advantages of CALL, interactivity seems to be a factor that may appeal to many learners, adds variety to the class, or reviews the language in a different way than traditional teaching methods. Obviously, soft-

ware or web-based exercises are more interactive and allow more options than paper-based exercises (Sharma & Barrett 2009: 10). Schüle (1998: 87) further argues that interactivity and fast updates are a powerful potential in comparison to textbooks, which are often outdated because of late releases.

Moreover, authentic language use is one of the goals of the communicative language teaching approach and is defined according to Hedge as “materials which have not been designed especially for language learners and therefore, do not have contrived or simplified language” (2000: 67). In order to be able to communicate, which would be the main objective of English Language Teaching (ELT), we cannot confront learners of English only with tailor-made, supposedly unauthentic coursebook texts that are written by authors and not taken from real life and in some cases do not even serve a communicative purpose. It is necessary to come into contact with language that is used by people talking English also for non-educating purposes. However, this argument raises some problems. Authentic language materials are not always at the same time appropriate for all learning contexts. It is hence argued that the “recommendation that teachers of English, or of any other language [...] should as a matter of principle, present only ‘real’ language is misguided, and misleading, on a number of counts” (Widdowson 2003: 103). Even though it is sometimes a good idea to escape from pedagogical texts and routines and introduce some actual language (ibid: 112), the most important issue to consider is the choice of authentic texts that help to reach the learning objective (ibid: 98) and are purposeful and effective for learning (ibid: 103). Conclusively, appropriateness is more important than authenticity.

The internet can be an ideal source for authentic language material, if it is used correctly. One can find different text types and genres written for diverse audiences and from various authors. Most of them would be defined as authentic texts. Furthermore, Lotherington (2005: 111) mentions that the internet has contributed to speed up language change, especially in terms of spelling, thinking of abbreviations or emoticons. "In the space of only a decade or so, online communication has revolutionized the orthographic conventions etched into literary consciousness since the Gutenberg era" (ibid.: 112). This change is represented only to a minimal extent in coursebooks. Therefore, CALL and particu-

larly the internet itself can be used as a resource for authentic texts, both written and oral. Finally, a point that speaks for authenticity as an advantage in CALL, even though there is little scientific proof for it, is the fact that authenticity of texts influences motivation positively. It shows learners that they can cope with authentic materials and the simple fact that the texts are “real” is motivating for a learner (Gilmore 2007: 107 ff.). We only have to keep in mind that pedagogic decisions need to be made according to “what kind of language data will be most conducive to the activation of learning, and at what stage, and in what manner ‘real’ texts [...] can be most effective” (Widdowson 2003: 99).

The next potential of CALL is its improving characteristic for general communicative competence. Heim and Ritter (2012: 174) argue that the aim of foreign language teaching is to equip students with skills to communicate referring to linguistic knowledge, but also skills for complex decision making in communication. The internet provides a large number of possibilities to get into contact with people. Students can talk or write to real people in all parts of the world via numerous tools without additional costs, enabling them to experience cultural language challenges themselves. Communication tools such as e-mails can be used within the framework of a classroom or a school as well.

Furthermore, CALL offers advantages to open up cultural perspectives and as a result develop intercultural communicative competence (ICC). One part of foreign language teaching is supposed to include cultural studies, which is not always easy to put into practice. Heim and Ritter (2012: 176 ff.) claim that in order to build up ICC one needs to know one’s own culture and language in order to be able to understand foreign cultures and languages. Therefore, students are supposed to increase their cultural awareness and be prepared to communicate with people from other nations. In the case of English it is not mainly with native speakers, but also international speakers, who use English as a lingua franca. Cultural differences often cause misunderstandings and require the speaker to have a sound judgment of how to act in different situations.

Another option are language learning websites such as *Livemocha* that offer a platform where members can discover culture by posting pictures of their country and describing landscapes or conventions and other people can comment and share their own experience. This is a step ahead of pictures in

coursebooks, because there is a real person behind the pictures, who tells the learner about his or her country. There are many more options to include cultural education in the CALL environment; however, the concept of culture is not always straight forward to explain and poses problems about the question of how to teach it or how to explain it. One still has to keep in mind that

[a]s educators and researchers within CALL we have to challenge the [educational] system by teaching students and teachers to develop a strong sense of understanding of other's worldviews and to question the root value system of their own culture. [...] We can assist students and teachers in learning the skills to collaborate with diverse teams of people - face to face or at a distance in the virtual community (Brander 2005: 151 ff.).

Being able to work with modern technology is one of the most important criteria for increasing one's value at the job market. Nowadays, computer skills are the basic prerequisite for most jobs, giving us obvious reasons why CALL is so important. Apart from the professional world, technology is part of the private life as well, ranging from communication to satisfying basic personal needs (e.g. shopping), looking for information or similar affairs for personal reasons. It was not always natural that everybody was expected to handle a computer. However, things change and working with computer technology has become inevitable. The most recently coined term "digital natives" refers to "learners born into the age of the internet (Meskill & Anthony 2010: 13, 191). The term shows us that younger generations usually do not have problems with technology. They develop their skills via interaction with technological devices in their everyday lives. Computers and other electronic devices have always been there since they were able to think and are integrated in a normal way, just as Bax (2003: 24) describes his stage of "integrated CALL"; however, even if digital natives experience the internet as a "normalized standard", this is still not true for the whole educational environment, since there are teachers, who are not part of this generation. Consequently, acquiring those digital competencies and teaching it to students seems to be a crucial task for the teacher. Meskill and Anthony (2010: 14) share the same opinion, when they say that "[t]he importance of these digital native competencies is that they cry out to be exploited in language education!". Ultimately, CALL serves to an extent to improve media competencies that are not only necessary on today's job market, but also for private purposes.

CALL further adds value to the language learners' skills to develop autonomy, which is one of the main objectives of every teacher. "Computers inherently allow for greater learner autonomy because, unlike a teacher, they are available beyond the time and space confines of the classroom [...]" (Beatty 2010: 153). If a student wishes to revise a topic, read more on a subject or improve grammar or other skills in a certain area, the computer and the internet are aids to do so independently. Of course, there are limitations to self-instructed learning with the internet in comparison to the support a qualified teacher offers; however, the means and resources the internet provides exceed a coursebook tremendously. There is a large number of options that might be more appealing than the frame a coursebook can offer. Certainly, this does not mean that a student will sit down and do exercises on his or her own just because the possibility is there. Nevertheless, "autonomy can be seen as an important prerequisite for lifelong learning" (Heim & Ritter 2012: 182 ff.) and consequently is an important skill for the students' education after school.

A further potential is developing critical media literacy, which is defined as

understanding principles of how communication and manipulation through media works, how to make use of them most effectively and even how to create them [...] (Heim & Ritter 2012: 183).

Students should learn how to interpret texts found in the media. They should be able to understand what the purpose of a text is, who it was written for, and what effect it might have. Especially the internet challenges inexperienced readers to shift through an enormous amount of information and leaving them on their own to judge whether a text is academic, emotional, factual, biased, written from only one perspective, and so on. This skill is not only necessary for the educational context, but is helpful as well for private and professional matters preventing them from being easily manipulated. CALL might be a means to focus on learning to be critical within the media environment.

Social learning is another argument for integrating CALL in the language classroom. Even though technology can only be seen as a tool, it is essential to keep in mind that this tool mediates and transforms human activity and contributes to social and cultural trends (Warschauer 2005: 48), as communication and interaction of today's world happen to a great extent via the computer. Even if this is

a little far-fetched, social learning that is promoted by CALL can be based in the broadest sense of the term on Vygotskij's (1987: 36) sociocultural theory, who claims that from our early childhood onwards we build up speech and thought by interaction with society. Therefore learning from the social to the individual is suggested to be the crucial way of learning.

So language has to be learned by interacting with others, since the sociocultural view sees learning as dynamic, ongoing and developing throughout life. Teaching from this perspective is defined as mediation whereby a learner is guided to acquisition and internalization of meaning within the social environment (Meskill & Anthony 2010: 12). A more detailed explanation of advantages on social learning can be found in the chapter 3.

2.3.2 Problems

Just as there are numerous advantages of CALL, there are a large number of challenges that potentially come with it. One of them is the fast development of the internet and other technologies. Websites, computers, software, and other technological devices may be outdated within a short time after their release on the market. This does not only pose problems on CALL research, but is also difficult to come up with guidelines for teachers on how to make use of CALL in the classroom, since any clear guideline would be old-fashioned within a few years or in some cases maybe even months. What adds to this fast-paced development, is that the majority of today's language learners are digital natives. In many cases their technological knowledge exceeds the one of the teacher, causing teachers to be unsure about the use of computers and technology in the classroom. Most teaching staff on the other hand are digital immigrants, "who have come late to the world of technology, if at all" (Dudeney & Hockly 2008: 9). This often results in parents or teachers being technophobe and having a dislike or even a fear of computers. Despite the fact that students might have a lead in technological skills, this does not mean that a teacher cannot turn this into an advantage. He or she can make use of the supposedly digitally native students in the classroom and learn more about computer technology by letting the students be the experts. Nevertheless, the opposite problem has to

be considered, which is that students' technological skills are often restricted and limited to certain parts and therefore need to be developed.

Another problem that poses itself to the CALL area is that the internet does not fulfill the function of a safe environment. Teachers might choose not to include using the internet in a classroom because safety on the internet is a delicate matter implying inappropriate contents and language, viruses, or cyber-bullying. It is the teachers' task to provide a safe environment by listing safe websites for research, choosing closed chat rooms, appropriate blogs and forums, or working with networks designed for educational purposes. It also includes teaching students the skills that enable them to judge whether a website can be used for learning or not. Of course, the risk of being exposed to inappropriate language will always remain; however, this risk also exists in the private sphere of a student even if the teacher decides not to include the internet in his or her teaching repertoire.

Apart from an unsafe environment or a fast-paced development, teachers are often skeptical about CALL because they may receive texts from students written with a poor translation program or find wrongly translated words or phrases in a text due to lacking context in online dictionaries. All these problems go back to a wrong usage of online tools. There are several online dictionaries, thesauri, collocation dictionaries or translation tools that students know. Instead of telling them to stay away from them, it would be a better idea to teach them how to use them properly. Thus, the teacher should act as the interlocutor who designs and guides learning processes. (Meskill & Anthony 2010: 13) Also what concerns the load of information available on the net; especially sites like Wikipedia, where everybody can contribute, need to be discussed. Students need to learn how to extract information and how to question it. Students in a school context need to get input on how to judge or evaluate information before they use it. Furthermore, they should know about plagiarism and how to cite sources correctly.

CALL provides an overwhelming amount of possibilities and materials. Especially the internet, since it was opened to any user who could connect to it in the mid nineties, has grown exponentially. Sharma and Barrett estimate the number of websites about ten million and the number of web pages over a billion (2009:

16). It is the teacher's responsibility to look for useful material in the classroom and even though it may be time-consuming, teachers need to examine if CALL programs are suitable for learners and find ways in which they can be adapted. (Beatty 2010: 165)

Mistakes and errors are a point that are often taken as an argument against CALL. Firstly, because the web is full of incorrect texts that might teach students wrong forms. Secondly, when writing in chat rooms or talking online there will be inevitable errors that students produce and there is the question how to correct them in synchronous communication. Nevertheless, there is no danger to students internalizing all wrong structures they see, and sometimes error correction is not favorable anyway. We know that language learning does not happen, as it was expected in the 1960s, in a behaviorist manner by simply repeating and imitating input (Lightbown & Spada 2006: 34; Mitchell & Myles 1998: 23 ff.). But still, the problem remains and teachers need to find a way to work with it. Therefore, written communication can be made available for the teacher by printing or saving it. This method allows a correction of errors after a synchronous chat, for example (Heim & Ritter 2012: 22).

A further problem that is definitely more restricting is mostly due to financial problems. Fact is that the equipment in schools is not always sufficient or that "the environment of traditional schools is not usually or ideally suited to the delivery of CALL or other types of computer-aided learning in a collaborative context" (Beatty 2010: 165). Although more and more schools offer computer labs and also students are often owners of laptops, not having the right infrastructure is certainly a problem a teacher cannot influence. This might not just be due to financial reasons, but also due to lacking professional support and the necessary update.

Difficulties that might be claimed by some teachers are curricular and time challenges. Computers or the internet connection might be slow or not working at all, which many would consider as wasting valuable teaching time. It is however questionable if this can be used as a valid argument. Meskill and Anthony (2010: 3) say that teaching modes require conceptualizations of time that are quite different from traditional teaching modes, but they do not necessarily require more time in all respects. In other words, CALL can be more time-

consuming to prepare than lessons without using a computer, but save time in other situations; e.g. when all materials are collected in one place or printed texts take less correction-time than handwritten text. In conclusion, CALL might be even saving time in terms of planning, teaching and correcting depending on the experience and knowledge of a teacher.

Summing it up, the potentials that CALL has do not leave a choice to any teacher, but to include it at least to a small extent in his or her classroom. Even if there are problems that challenge the implementation of CALL in a classroom, it confirms that computers cannot replace a teacher completely, which is a comforting thought. CALL is versatile and every teacher can adjust it to his or her teaching needs. But one has to keep in mind that keeping oneself updated is the most important factor in the area of technology.

3 Social Media

This chapter focuses on social media technologies, provides a definition of what is meant by social media and what other terms we have to distinguish from it, in which ways language learning, motivation and social media go hand in hand, and what is understood by peer learning websites. Furthermore, several instances of peer learning websites or platforms are presented along with *livemocha.com*, which serves as the example website for the empirical research of this project.

3.1 Definition

Social media is a term that can be found everywhere usually referring to different areas in the computer field including different ways of communicating with people via internet. However, there are also other terms in use that seem to represent the same things such as social web, social software, social networks

or web 2.0. It has been decided to refer to social media in this project for the reason that social media is supposed to act as an umbrella term here, because the term media represents “the means of communication that reach large numbers of people” (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/media>, 21 Nov. 2012). The means of communication can therefore imply not only websites or social networks, but it also refers to software, to hardware technology such as computers, laptops, smartphones etc., and to all other aspects of CALL that were mentioned in the previous chapter (cf. chapter 2.3) in connection with the internet.

The definition of social media will be more clear-cut when opposing it to the other terms. This differentiation though is not always clear and often terms are used synonymously. Web 2.0, a term widely used nowadays and initially coined by Tim O’Reilly at a conference in 2004 (Alby 2008: 15), describes the nature of the web and how it has changed since its beginnings (Heim & Ritter 2012: 142); namely static websites with no or little options of social interaction. Ebersbach, Glaser and Heigl (2008: 24-27), who call this static version of the internet web 1.0, add another point to the definition of web 2.0, i.e. the more technological term for social web that also includes economic and judicial aspects. Moreover, it has to be said that web 1.0, web 2.0, or web 2.5/web 3.0 which can also sometimes be found, are misleading in a way, because they are not a “new version” of the internet or a software update, but more or less a social movement. Social web, as Ebersbach, Glaser and Heigl argue (*ibid.*: 32 ff.), stands for the areas of web 2.0 that are not concerned with new formats or program architecture. The term focuses on the support of social structures and interaction via the internet. Heim and Ritter (2012: 142) and Dudeney and Hockly (2008: 86) use the term social software that “enables users of the web to interact with each other, to co-construct meaning and to produce as well as view materials online.” This definition seems to match the previous one; however, it is to criticize that the word “software” is not appropriate, even though it can be found repeatedly in the literature, since web 2.0 technologies do not provide software in the usual sense, i.e. a program one buys or downloads and that cannot be changed by the user. It is a kind of service someone provides which is easier to update and lies on a central server, where clients can access from outside.

Social networks or social network services (SNS) are there to connect friends, business partners, or sometimes also people who do not know each other personally, but who have the same interests. Usually, they are characterized by the following features: a registration is necessary, users have a profile that shows personal characteristics such as interests, relationships to other users, data is presented in a structured form, and often but not always, these relationships are based on real-life relationships (Ebersbach, Glaser & Heigl 2008: 96). Very popular examples of SNS are *Facebook* or *MySpace* which mainly act as networks for private purposes; although more and more companies use it as an advertising platform; *LinkedIn* or *Xing* are prominent instances for business social network services with the role of representing individuals from their professional side or providing space for companies to make their profile public.

To conclude from what was said above, it is clear that the meaning of social media in the general usage is still quite fuzzy, because there is no concurrent meaning on the term. Consequently, social media in this context is used to talk about all forms of technology that enhance communication and build up social relationships which are formed or maintained in the world wide web. In order to be more specific, other terms as social networks or web 2.0 will be used in the sense as they were defined in this chapter.

3.2 Types of Social Media Technology

In order to be clear which applications and technologies fall into the field of social media, or the social web in particular, a short list of web tools and functions will be provided that represent the most important social media technologies. The definitions given are taken from Ebersbacher, Glaser & Heigl (2008) unless stated differently.

Wikis, as the first instance, are websites that allow a collaborative editing and writing of text. The most famous example for a wiki is *Wikipedia*. Forums, as opposed to wikis, are another form of collaborative work on websites; where, editing a text of another member is not possible. Instead, only answers and statements can be added to other comments. All contributions of participants

are then listed in a chronological order and they are additionally structured by topics.

Weblogs or blogs in short, on the other hand, are webpages that are usually only edited by a single person. Sometimes they act as a kind of online diary, but they can also concern different topics. The social function of blogs is that readers are able to post comments and connect between different blogs. Microblogs work similarly as blogs, but only consist of very short messages that readers can follow and comment mostly via mobile online devices. *Twitter* is a popular example of a microblog. Furthermore, social network services as the most striking instance for social media are, as already mentioned, online platforms that focus on fostering relationships.

Another tool of the social web is social sharing. It provides the function of sharing resources such as pictures, videos, or documents with other users. Pages like *Dropbox* allow users to exchange and save all kinds of data. *Picasa* or *flickr* work exclusively for saving, exchanging and viewing pictures. And pages like *YouTube* are used for sharing videos.

Virtual game worlds can also be seen as part of the social media area. *Second Life* is a virtual game world where users can create characters (avatars) and move around just like in the real world; e.g. work, attend seminars, go to a restaurant or the movies. Virtual game worlds also include so-called massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs) such as *World of Warcraft* or *Star Wars: The Old Republic*; these are “online role-playing games where players move, act and communicate with other players in an internet-based virtual three-dimensional environment” (Bryant 2006).

The tools that are probably most interesting for a language learning context are all kinds of communication tools for writing and speaking, including messaging, chat functions, instant messaging, or online telephoning via *Skype* or *Viber* for mobile devices. Of course, there are more tools and functions that social media technologies offer; which are not of central relevance for this project.

3.3 Success of Social Media Technologies

Social media is facing great popularity nowadays. It is a phenomenon that intervenes in peoples' private and professional lives and has become part of modern socialization and cultural exchange (Ebersbacher, Glaser & Heigl 2008: 15). A high percentage of our society uses social media technologies, especially younger generations. However, also more and more older people get used to talking on *Skype* or using *Facebook* or integrating social media technologies in their lives in a different way. Thus, it needs to be investigated, why those technologies are successful and how this success can be used to turn it into an increase of motivation for language learning and relate them further to the language learning classroom.

Interestingly, people invest large amounts of their leisure time in working with social media technologies. The most popular social web services these days are *Facebook* and *YouTube*; websites that demonstrate outstanding statistics about user habits. According to statistics published on the *YouTube* website (http://www.youtube.com/t/press_statistics?hl=en, 24 Nov. 2012) there are over 800 million unique users visiting the website each month watching over 4 billion hours of videos. 72 hours of videos are uploaded every minute. Another interesting fact is that traffic from mobile devices tripled in 2011; more than 20% of the views come from 350 million mobile devices. Furthermore, more than 700 videos are shared on *Twitter* each minute and 100 million people take social action on the website including "likes", "shares", or comments per week. Over 50% of the videos on *YouTube* have received comments or have been rated by the *YouTube* community. Clicks on the 'like' or 'dislike' button on YouTube have doubled since the start of 2011. The social networking site *Facebook* presents even more impressive figures. Since October 2012 the website has recorded one billion active users monthly; about 81% of those users come from outside the U.S. and Canada. On average, 584 million active users daily and 604 million active users monthly who used Facebook mobile products were documented in September 2012 (<http://newsroom.fb.com/Key-Facts>, 24 Nov. 2012).

There is general evidence that the fastest growing social media services are social networking sites (SNS) (Lin & Lu 2011: 1152). But what are the specific factors that trigger the success of social media technologies? In a study Lin and

Lu (2011) carried out, they are setting usefulness, enjoyment, number of members and peers on a SNS, and complementary products such as photo sharing, chat functions, or games, as motivating factors for using SNS. They found out that all factors play a role, but enjoyment in particular has the most significant effect on the continued use of SNS. The number of peers and complementary offers in turn reinforce the enjoyment and also usefulness of a SNS. Even though this study was done within a limited scope, it is still useful for predicting the driving force of reasons for the use of SNS. Even if those reasons are not completely clear, Alby (2008: 116) suggests that people add information about themselves on SNS or contribute their knowledge to wikis, because they expect others to do so as well thereby profiting from each other's contributions and building up a community. Beatty also argues that "perhaps the greatest reason for collaboration at the computer is the simple human desire for social contact; learners like to explore together and work together" (2010: 121). The web has simply created space to socialize and interact with others, additionally offering the opportunity to do it from either at home, without the need to leave the house, or via a mobile device that allows people to get into contact with others no matter where they are. Creating communities further fosters communication and interaction. Online communities are there to get into contact with people with the same interests (Ebersbach, Glaser & Heigl 2008: 185). Getting to know people in this way might be even easier and sometimes also cheaper than going out and trying to find people with the same interests at clubs or public places.

Another possible factor is that the internet also seems appealing as it allows people to hide their real identity (Ebersbacher, Glaser & Heigl 2008: 200). The social web leaves it to the user if he or she wants to appear as the real self or as someone completely different. Although, this might raise a large number of problems, it may also have advantages in the sense of overcoming language anxiety by not revealing one's identity.

The question remains, however, if we can assume that people who voluntarily use social media technologies in their everyday lives, are similarly motivated to use them in an educational setting. According to a study of Bennett et al. (2011) there are significant challenges when trying to make social medial tools coher-

ent with educational goals. We cannot assume that students will bring the same enthusiasm they have for their private use of social media technologies to the classroom and use it for learning purposes. There either needs to be a reshaping of educational goals, or an adaptation of social media tools for an educational context, because potential learning benefits can only come from an effective use of the web.

3.4 Language Learning and Social Media

The next question that needs to be asked is how social media and language learning can work together. The issue at stake here is the social factor. As already stated in chapter 2.3.1 the sociocultural theory of learning assumes that cognitive development and therefore also language learning are a consequence of social interactions. “The primary function of speech, in both children and adults, is communication, social contact. The earliest speech of the child is therefore essentially social” (Vygotskij 1987: 35). Extending this theory to this purpose, it means that when children acquire language through social interaction, second language learning should also happen by interacting and communicating with others, since language mainly has a social purpose. There are several other theories that put emphasis on interaction in language learning. The interaction hypothesis says that conversational interaction is essential to second language learning. Interaction in a learning environment needs modification in order to help learners, since comprehensible input is important (Lightbown & Spada 2006: 43). Also Brown (2001: 42) states that input only is not an effective way to learn a language, but language acquisition goes back to social interaction with different input deliverers.

While parental input is a significant part of the child’s development of conversational rules, it is only one aspect, as the child also interacts with peers and, of course, with other adults.

It is questionable, whether acquisition of language at an early age is comparable to second language learning later on; however, there are theories that apply to both young adult and adult learners. It is said that learning occurs in general when individuals communicate with other interlocutors in their zone of proximal development, which is a situation in which the learner is capable of performing

at a higher level, because of support of the interaction partner (Lightbown & Spada 2006: 47). This means that learners can achieve better results in their learning process, when they interact with others. Conversation partners support the discourse by adding new information or helping the speaker continuing the flow of speaking. This is not only true for young learners, but also for adult learners. On the whole, language learning in a social environment is inevitable. Therefore, learning a language via social media technologies opens up a large number of options that have not been available for language teaching a couple of years ago.

Collaboration is among the most useful ways in which learners acquire language at the computer. When two or more learners sit at a computer and discuss process and content in the target language, they often engage in scaffolding learning, helping each other improve their language (Beatty 2010: 108).

The potential benefits of language learning with social media technologies will be portrayed here with the help of some specific examples.

The study of Bennett et al. (2011: 527-532) shows that there are various ways of using social media technologies in a learning environment apart from language learning. They used student-generated digital photo archives for chemistry, biology and environmental education lessons, where students had to upload and comment pictures of others for a certain topic. Those activities were often seen as fun and entertaining; however, they were also considered as useless in many cases. The case studies also approached the matter from a writing focus, using blogs for journalism classes and teacher education classes in order to publish their own writing or to share their experiences. This was rated positively by the majority; especially when students saw it as essential for their future jobs. Being able to see what other students in the course were doing was interpreted as constructive as well, but on the other hand, it was considered to be an unwanted, additional burden by some of the students.

Heim and Ritter (2012: 169) also give many suggestions on how to use social media technologies for learning purposes. Blogs, wikis, or podcasts in a language learning setting can be used in different ways. It is claimed that the condition that students are writing for a specific audience and a purpose is most essential and motivating. For example if students know their classmates will

read and comment on their texts or might use them for further exercises, it will increase the likelihood that they care about what they are writing.

There have also been attempts to integrate MMORPGs such as *World of Warcraft* into language learning. Bryant (2006) emphasizes the social environment as a key aspect, since languages are not learned by translating everything into one's native language, but by placing language into context. He argues that those games require an active role of the learner, because it is "learning by doing". Learners discover language and the approach moves away from explicit teaching and towards a natural acquisition. Simulations further contribute to help more introvert learners. Moreover, students are confronted to talk with native speakers, as well as non-native speakers thereby creating a virtual reality, where students are naturally immersed in the target language.

Implementing blogs, wikis, podcasts, or MMORPS in the language classroom are only some possibilities to include social media in language learning. As discussed before SNS are the fastest growing social media technology and it would be interesting to analyze how to utilize them as a tool in language learning. The main concern for most of those social media technologies is, however, that they are not necessarily designed for educational settings. This might be advantageous in some respects, but also challenging for teachers, since all those tools and functions need to relate to educational goals and be modified for the language learning setting if necessary. A possibility for adapting social media technologies more easily are peer learning platforms that resemble SNS structures (Weninger 2010: 8).

3.5 Peer Learning Websites

Peer learning websites or -platforms are online services that offer learning opportunities – language learning or other subjects - for registered users. They represent a mixture of SNS, e-learning platforms, a compilation of online learning materials, and communication tools. They further include peer correction and peer communication with registered users from all over the world, but sometimes also selected countries. Often educational partnership projects or

tandem learning fall into this category which have been available since the 1990s (Schüle 1998: 80).

As already mentioned, the difficulty of implementing social media technologies in the classroom remains. They present themselves as an open source with dangers. Furthermore, it has become clear that the motivation to use social media technologies for private reasons is not the same as doing it for educational reasons. It is ,therefore, hard to use the motivational aspects of social media technologies and turn them into a successful language learning situation. This is why peer learning platforms are used for the purpose of this study. They are supposed to reconcile the problems that come up in different CALL-fields and social media technologies with the intention of achieving a beneficial outcome and an effective learning situation.

One of the problems (cf. chapter 2.3.2) discussed before is the fact that the internet is not a safe learning environment. It might be the case that in open chatlines or forums inappropriate language or contents are spread. Beatty mentions the problem of pornography, pedophiles, or cyberbullying online (2010: 180-83). Even though, students cannot be safe from those problems on the web in general, the likelihood of these matters is far smaller on peer learning websites than in open chats or websites. Users of peer learning platforms are usually interested in learning a language themselves and therefore provide a community that shares the same interests and goals. At the same time they form a network of people from all over the world, who mainly use the sites voluntarily. Materials provided on the platforms are more or less tailored to individual learners' needs and focus on language learning aspects.

Certainly, it has to be said that not all problems of CALL can be solved by using peer learning platforms, as technical problems can always trouble teachers. The fear that personal data might be saved and documented is another setback of social networks; however, peer learning platforms usually do not require crucial information about a person. Only a username, the native language(s), languages you want to learn have to be saved, and it is optional to add a birth date, a city, or reasons why learning a foreign language. So, the data required on the platform still secures students' private sphere. Moreover, peer learning

platforms are used for the purpose of learning in the first place, other than the use of MMORPGs for example.

As Meskill & Anthony put it correctly:

If we accept as a given that computers are inherently social machines, most pleasurable used for communication and conversation with others, and that learning is best mediated by instructional conversations, then online can be viewed as an optimal venue for language instruction (2010: 14-15).

Thus, it needs to be considered that the benefits outweigh the drawbacks, since “online communities enhance students’ sense of belonging and strengthen social contacts, community engagement and learning” (Tervakari et al. 2012: 35). Peer learning platforms as well as other forms of social media technologies do have some motivating aspects, such as the fact that people are writing for a real audience and not just producing text for the teacher to read and correct. Research on social-environmental influences have been done by Weiner (1994) and Wentzel (1999) in so-called social motivation theory and it has been found out that “[a] great deal of human motivation stems from the sociocultural context rather than from the individual” (cf. Dörnyei 2011: 10). Nonetheless, simply because social interaction can effect motivation positively, it cannot be concluded that social contact works the same way in a learning context as in a private context. Even though people may use social networks for private reasons to a great extent, the effects for using them for learning purposes might differ greatly. A study by Tervakari et al. (2012: 38 ff.) found out that there was only limited active conversations and contributions in a learning environment. The participants of the study, students of a university, were encouraged to use a social media web service created for a learning context, where they had to work in peer groups on assignments and comment on each other’s contributions. The outcome was that social exchange did only happen to the extent that was required and only few students commented on the work of other’s voluntarily and most of the network activity happened around the assignment deadlines. The individual opinions of participants were also rather skeptical about the usefulness of this kind of learning; however even though social media learning did not have the same success as other social media technologies the ability to work and communicate with others and find, utilize and distribute knowledge is considered

increasingly essential in working life where small-group problem solving has replaced top-down management (ibid.: 2012: 35).

Another important question that comes up along with motivation and is relevant for this study is how motivating peer learning can be. Peer learning and mentoring have been established as a powerful learning tool to increase effectiveness of learning in academic areas and to enhance independent learning (Adam, Skalicky & Brown 2011: 10). An important factor of peer learning is feedback, because feedback from other learners can be helpful and support the learning process. Corneli and Mikroyannidis (2011: 18) propose a targeted set of feedback options for peer learning websites, since the clearer and easier it is for a user the more likely he or she is to give helpful feedback. The “like” button on *Facebook* is a simplistic example of feedback. Obviously, for a learning context feedback needs to be more elaborate, and it must be given in a form that helps the learner to implement it in a meaningful way. He or she should understand why something needs improvement and how to improve it. Furthermore, it has to be considered that feedback-giving involves an extra-step and more effort; therefore, it should not take too long to read and write or people will not make use of it (ibid.: 19). Peer learning can further increase achievement, because learners can compare themselves with each other, thus setting individual and collective goals. (ibid.: 20).

In order to give a better impression of what falls into the category of peer learning websites, a few selected examples will be presented. One peer learning platform available online is *eTwinning* (www.etwinning.net, 04 Dec. 2012), a project for lifelong learning of the European Union that is a safe and free website for schools in the EU to work on collaborative projects. The portal provides online tools for teachers, schools, librarians etc. and help to share ideas, connect and communicate with other schools, or set up projects. *eTwinning* mainly works with existing web applications such as *Skype*, *YouTube*, *Flickr* etc. for communication and sharing. The way how people work together and what they do exactly can vary. It can be used for every subject taught in school and it depends on teachers’ creativity what can be done. Obviously there are numerous options; some project groups built up a database with pictures and thereby discovered new cultures, others did projects with tandem partners (Crawley &

Gillera 2011). One advantage of this portal is that it works exclusively in a school context and all actions are supervised by the teacher. The *eTwinning* partners of students fall into the same or almost the same age group and work in a similar context.

P2PU – Peer to Peer University (<https://p2pu.org/en/>, 04 Dec. 2012) - is another platform that provides online space for people to collaborate to learn certain topics by completing tasks, assessing individual and group work, and providing constructive feedback outside an educational setting. Students can do tasks provided by the website and give and receive comments from others and get helpful advice on how to overcome difficulties or improve learning strategies.

Another peer learning platform on offer is *busuu.com* (www.busuu.com, 04 Dec. 2012). The website provides a community that is entirely interested in language learning. *Busuu* provides the possibility to learn twelve different languages by interacting with people from all over the world and by working on tasks and exercises provided by the website. There is a free version accessible for everyone on the web and a premium version that bears a charge, but adds additional tasks and more materials and offers the tools on mobile apps.

Similar to *busuu.com*, *livemocha.com* (www.livemocha.com, 04 Dec. 2012) is another online language learning community platform that allows chatting and messaging with members of the community from all over the world and offers exercises as well as learning materials in 38 languages. All the functions and learning tools that *Livemocha* offers are presented in more detail in chapter 5.3.1.

4 Motivation

Motivation is a crucial factor in language learning (Dörnyei 2009b: 22); however, it seems to be a vague expression in general. Therefore, it needs to be clarified first what we are talking about. To find out how peer learning websites influence the motivation of language learners, a definition and a theoretical construct for

motivation have been laid out introducing motivational theories that help to understand the concept. Furthermore, the requirements for conducting empirical research will be explained.

4.1 What is Motivation?

Most people intuitively think to know what motivation is, and what is meant when someone is described as motivated. Motivation is talked about frequently in everyday life in different settings and contexts. We often hear sentences like “I am absolutely not motivated to write this thesis.” or “What motivated you to take this class?” without even thinking about what this thing called motivation is.

The word motivation derives from the Latin word “movere”, meaning “to move”. We usually assume motivation is something that moves a person to make decisions or do something (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 3). However, what it is exactly that makes people move or take actions is not quite clear, because we cannot see what is going on in a person. Therefore, it has to be kept in mind that attempting a definition of motivation is rather difficult because it is not a clear-cut phenomenon that can easily be described or measured. Nevertheless, motivation plays an important role in second and foreign language learning, because the overall findings in research suggest that positive attitudes and motivation are related to success in second language learning (Gardner 1985: 142). Dörnyei also states that “[w]ithout sufficient motivation, [...] even the brightest learners are unlikely to persist long enough to attain any really useful language” (2001: 5).

Several researchers in the fields of psychology, philosophy, and language studies have failed to provide a simple definition of motivation. The reason for that might be the facts that motivation can refer to very different things and is “best seen as a broad umbrella term that covers a variety of meanings”, although strictly speaking, we cannot even be sure that such a thing as motivation exists (Dörnyei 2001: 1). The question is then, why the term motivation is still used regularly. According to Dörnyei (2001: 2),

[t]he term is useful for theoreticians and researchers as for practitioners because it highlights one basic aspect of the human mind. This aspect is related to what one *wants/desires* [...].

Looking at it from a psychological perspective Rheinberg and Vollmeyer (2012: 14 ff.) define motivation according to three factors; first motivation implies a need to reach a certain goal, second, to take an effort, and third, to be persistent in doing something without getting distracted. Those factors are part of the concept “motivation” and can further vary in intensity. The individual can also experience feelings of suspense or tension, activation, desire, or the urge to do or want something. Moreover, motivation can never be seen or experienced directly from another person. They also state that we cannot classify states and conditions like striving, want, effort, desire or hope that all play an important role in actions we take. What they have in common is that they imply a component of activation in life fostering an individual positively evaluated condition. Consequently, motivation is also seen as a collective category that involves various processes and phenomena.

A definition that adds further information is the following:

Der Motivationsbegriff ist vielmehr eine Abstraktionsleistung, mit der von vielen verschiedenen Prozessen des Lebensvollzuges jeweils diejenigen Komponenten oder Teilaspekte herausgegriffen und behandelt werden, die mit der ausdauernden Zielausrichtung unseres Verhaltens zu tun haben (Heckhausen & Heckhausen 2010 in Rheinberg & Vollmeyer 2012: 15).

In other words this means that the term motivation refers to an abstracting performance that influences those components and aspects of life that are concerned with persistent orientation towards a goal in our behavior. There are several ways how to describe motivation in psychology, but overall, research in this field is still in progress (Dörnyei 2001: 12).

The same is true from a linguistic position, because the definition of motivation is not necessarily easier to put together from a language learning point of view. Again, motivation is concerned with why people do something, which is the choice of a particular action, how long they are willing to sustain the activity or also the persistence with it, and how hard they are going to pursue it or the effort expended on it (Dörnyei 2001: 7, Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 4). A quite simi-

lar definition regarding language learning in particular was given by Gardner (1985: 10):

Motivation in the present context refers to the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes toward learning in the language. That is, motivation to learn a second language is seen as referring to the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity.

Therefore, it is not effort or persistence alone that makes up motivation, since effort might also be affected by pressure from outside. Also desire, attitude, and striving are prominent factors that need to be considered in order to experience situations as positive and satisfactory. Gardner (2010: 8) then adds another aspect that counts for motivated individuals; namely that they are goal-directed. Effort, desire, persistence are used to attain goals, which further leads to having expectancies about success and failure. Moreover, he calls reasons for a certain behavior “motives”.

When we ask why someone is motivated to learn a language there might be an endless list of answers to that. Those answers or reasons are then the motives someone has. For example, people might state that they learn a language because they want to be able to communicate in a certain country, they have to do it in school, they need it for their work, or simply because they are interested in a language or a culture. Researching the motives or reasons for language learning, however, is not exactly researching motivation according to Gardner (2010: 11). They rather reflect an orientation. Moreover, there is a type of motivation called language classroom motivation, which is concerned with motivation in an educational setting, and is affected by the environment in the class, the nature of the course and the curriculum, characteristics of the teacher, and the educational nature of the student him- or herself (ibid.: 10).

To draw a conclusion, what motivation now is we have to maintain the thought that motivation is multifaceted and hence cannot be measured by one scale (Gardner 2010: 8 ff.). Furthermore, L2 motivation consists of the factors effort, persistence, and the personal longing to do something including desire and reaching a goal combined with motives or reasons behind an action. It can also

be stated that motivation is both cause and effect of learning, since they function in a cyclical relationship (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 5).

4.2 Motivational Theories

The following theories are included because they describe various concepts of motivation concerning learning a second or foreign language and because they “intend to explain [...] why humans think and behave as they do” (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 4). The theories mentioned are selected examples and do not intend to give a complete picture of all motivational theories, since this would exceed the scope of the paper. However, they are supposed to give an overview of how motivation can be structured and measured and show the complexity of the topic in order to meet the research aims of the paper.

4.2.1 Expectancy-Value Theories

Most theories about motivation are based on a cognitive perspective; therefore, they are called cognitive theories. It means that mental structures that influence the behavior of people are in the focus and how they are transformed into action. One of those cognitive theories is the expectancy-value theory, because according to its main principles, the expectancy of success; e.g. rewards, and the value an individual attaches to this success are the two key factors of motivation. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011: 13 ff.) provide the following definition:

Expectancy-value frameworks theorise that individuals’ motivated decisions to engage in particular tasks and their performance and persistence can be explained by their expectations of how well they will do on the task and how much they value its achievement.

Theories that go along with expectancy-value frameworks are achievement motivation and the attribution theory, which will be outlined briefly.

Achievement Motivation

Achievement motivation lies within the expectancy-value framework, because according to this theory the need for achievement and the fear of failure deter-

mine peoples' behavior (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 14). It is an early model of Atkinson and Raynor (1974: 13), who classified the need for achievement and the fear of failure as striking features influencing motivation. The theory is characterized by conflicting approach and avoidance tendencies.

The positive influences are the perceived probability of success, which refers to accomplishments that people expect, and the incentive value of successful task fulfillment and need for achievement. Individuals can have a high need for achievement because they are interested in the success of a task, rather than in any form of extrinsic rewards or outcomes of the task. The negative influences involve the fear of failure and additionally the tendency to avoid it, which is the opposite of achievement. The motivation to do something well then comes from the avoidance of a negative outcome, rather than achieving a positive one (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 14; Dörnyei 2001: 10).

Rheinberg and Vollmeyer (2012: 60-62).also talk about achievement motivation or "Leistungsmotivation" in German. They define it as "eine Auseinandersetzung mit einem Gütemaßstab" [an engagement with a scale of quality]. This means that the quality of the achievement itself is important rather than the personal advantage that comes with an action. Examples they name are counting points in games, measuring time or points in sports and setting new records. Doing better than before is a kind of motivation that shows it is not the usefulness of an action, but the achievement itself that is important. An achievement motive then is an individual specific constant that can vary vastly among people. Those motives influence how someone perceives a situation.

Attribution Theory

Attribution theory is based on the work of Bernard Weiner (1986) and deals with "the perception of causality, or the perceived reasons for a particular event's occurrence" (Weiner 1992: 230). The major principle of attribution theory is that individuals have explanations or causal attributions of why actions in the past have been successful or not. (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 15; Dörnyei 2001: 10)

According to Graham (1994), most common attributions in a school context are ability, effort, task difficulty, luck, mood, family background, and the help or hindrance of others (cited in Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 15). Dörnyei adds that in a

school environment ability and effort have been identified as the most dominant perceived causes, and past failure that the learner perceived to be caused by his or her low ability hinders future achievement behavior more than failure that is ascribed to insufficient effort (Dörnyei 2001: 10). Whether those assumptions are true or not, either way they have a significant effect on motivation.

Now, we have to go into more detail here and make a difference between making attributions due to experiences in the past as we have described attribution theory, and perceived self-efficacy as it was determined by Albert Bandura. He claims that “self-efficacy is concerned with judgments of personal capability” (1997: 11) regardless of past experiences, not to be confused with self-esteem, which “is concerned with judgments of self-worth” (ibid.). Self-efficacy theory therefore explains peoples’ judgment of their own abilities, which has an effect on their motivation of taking action. Motivation is likely to be higher the more capability a person ascribes to him- or herself. However, it is noted that self-efficacy beliefs are only indirectly connected to actual competences (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 16).

The problem with attributions is that they are not visible from an outside perspective and cannot be measured easily. Although the theories may be very appropriate in terms of motivation and how people act, they lack to provide reasons why people are striving to achieve something. Yet, this point will be elaborated more in the field of goal theories.

4.2.2 Goal Theories

Goal theories belong to the category of cognitive theories as well. They further split up into goal setting theory, goal orientation theory, and goal content and multiplicity. In general, goal theories replaced earlier theories that assumed human behavior to be dependent on drives as defined by Sigmund Freud or needs as Maslow suggested. Goal theories rather used the term goals as the driving force for motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 19). “[G]oals are not only outcomes to shoot for but also standards by which students can evaluate their own performance and [...] mark their progress” (Dörnyei 2001: 82).

Goal-setting theory

The goal-setting theory according to Locke and Latham (1990 quoted in Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 20; Dörnyei 2001: 10) explains how human action is caused; namely by setting goals and pursuing choice. Moreover, goal-setting theory is compatible with an expectancy-value framework because goals require a certain expectancy.

Goals need to have three main properties. They need to be specific, which means that a goal needs to be clear to a person (i.e. the person needs to know what he or she wants to achieve). They also need to be difficult within reason to lead to the highest performance, referring to goals that seem to be manageable. And, there is the prerequisite that the individual shows goal commitment. Locke (1996 cited in Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 20) added more explicit definitions for goals. First, the higher the difficulty of the goal is, the greater the achievement will be. Second, the more specifically or explicitly the goal is stated, the more precisely performance is regulated. Third, a combination of difficulty and explicitness leads to the highest performance. Fourth, commitment to goals is important, since easy or vague goals do not require enough dedication. And finally, high commitment is guaranteed when the individual considers the goal as important and attainable or at least when progress can be made.

Goal-orientation theory

In order to understand the goal-orientation theory we need to define first what mastery goals and performance goals are.

Mastery goals (focusing on learning the content) are superior to performance goals (focusing on demonstrating ability and getting good grades) in that they are associated with a preference for challenging work, an intrinsic interest in learning activities, and positive attitudes towards learning (Dörnyei 2001: 10).

It has to be noted that this theory was developed for learning in a school setting. According to Ames (1992) the aim of the theory is to differentiate between two orientations students can adopt for their academic work: mastery orientation to meet the mastery goals and performance orientation to meet performance goals. This separation of orientation shows that there are different reasons for engaging in achievement activity (cf. chapter 4.2.1) (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011:

21 ff.). What is important is the fact that reasons for human behavior are not just due to a personal nature because people want to achieve things for themselves, but they may also be due to achieving public recognition.

Goal content and multiplicity

So far, we have considered goals that are focused on achievement, academic performance, and competence. Wentzel (2000) did research on the content of students' goals and why they were trying to achieve something. A noteworthy outcome was that most of the time there are multiple goals behind actions that are not directed at academic performance, because a student might be eager to study in order to impress a teacher, make friends, or avoid punishment (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 22).

Wentzel's research (2000: 106) has triggered more studies on social and multiple goals and it has been found out that

a focus on goal content allows for the possibility that although individuals might pursue a core set of personal goals across a variety of situations [...], goals also are socially derived constructs that cannot be studied in isolation of the rules and conventions of culture and context.

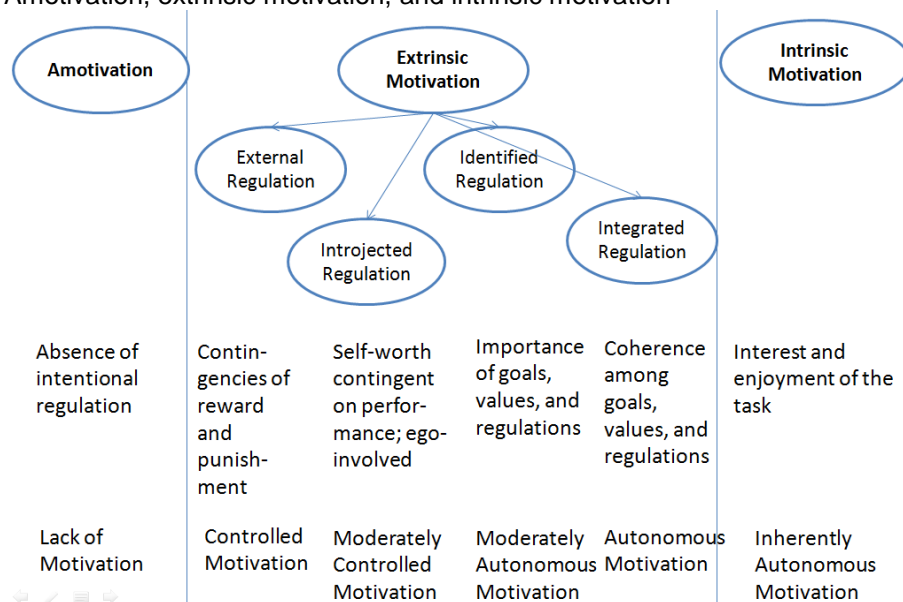
4.2.3 Self Determination Theory (SDT)

Another cognitive theory is the self-determination theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan (1985). In this theory "we distinguish between different types of motivation based on the different reasons or goals that give rise to an action" (Ryan & Deci 2000: 55). A very important and well-known distinction between intrinsic (IM) and extrinsic motivation (EM) is part of the SDT. Dörnyei provides the following definition of those two terms:

Intrinsic motivation concerns behaviour performed for its own sake in order to experience pleasure and satisfaction such as the joy of doing a particular activity or satisfying one's curiosity. Extrinsic motivation involves performing a behaviour as a means to an end, that is, to receive some extrinsic reward (e.g. good grades) or to avoid punishment. Human motives can be placed on a continuum between self-determined (intrinsic) and controlled (extrinsic) forms of motivation (2001: 10).

IM has always been considered as more valuable in connection with a learning situation. However, the current views suggest that EM is equally important, because it is a powerful and effective form of motivation which can be measured. Additionally, IM is not always available and EM can be added more easily (Ryan & Deci 2000: 55). Furthermore, EM can undermine IM, since students can lose their natural intrinsic interest quickly if they do not have an extrinsic requirement as well. There is also a third type of motivation called amotivation (AM), which is used to talk about the lack of any kind of motivation, neither IM, nor EM (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 24). Figure 1 gives an overview of how those types of motivation are built up and their differentiation between autonomous and controlled motivation according to SDT (Gagné & Deci 2005: 336).

Figure 1 Amotivation, extrinsic motivation, and intrinsic motivation



“Central to SDT is the distinction between autonomous motivation and controlled motivation” (Gagné & Deci 2005: 333). Depending on the type of regulation, EM can be placed on a continuum representing varying degrees of internal regulation and external control. There are four types of EM in SDT. Firstly, there is external regulation, which is the least self-determined type, because it comes entirely from an external source including rewards and threats. Secondly, there is introjected regulation, which is a little more self-determined, but still caused externally to a great extent. It involves externally imposed rules that someone accepts as a norm and are followed in order not to feel guilty. Thirdly, identified regulation happens when a person takes action because he or she highly identifies with a behavior and sees it as useful; for example, when languages are

learned to pursue other hobbies and interests. And fourthly, integrated regulation – as the most self-determined type of EM – is choiceful behavior that is fully assimilated with the individuals values. Although not visible in figure 1, extrinsic goals that are fully internalized with the individuals' values may thus co-exist with IM (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 24). To be more precise, autonomous motivation includes IM, as well as internalized EM (Gagné & Deci 2005: 340).

The SDT as well as other cognitive theories ground their assumptions on the same basis; namely that there are several influencing factors that determine individual's total motivation for actions, but the foundation of making predictions is usually only represented by the one variable; namely motivation (ibid.: 340 ff.). The next two models presented will try to look at motivation from a slightly different perspective.

4.2.4 The Socio-Educational Model

A very influential model on L2 acquisition and motivation was developed by Robert Gardner and his colleagues. This model is primarily concerned with the individual differences in second language acquisition and the research on it started around 1960. It has been based on empirical foundations and revised and developed several times.

The socio-educational model, as implied by its name, stresses two important features associated with second language learning. One is the cultural context and the other one is the educational context (Gardner 2010: 85).

According to Gardner (1985: 146 ff.) the model - as it was published in 1979 – serves as an introduction to the more recent version of the socio-educational model published in 2006. It has been included since it was widely used then and because it shows how research focus developed. The former model based the success of language learning on four main variables that are interacting with each other and cannot be looked at separately: social milieu, individual learner differences, second language acquisition contexts and outcomes.

Figure 2 Schematic representation of the theoretical model 1979

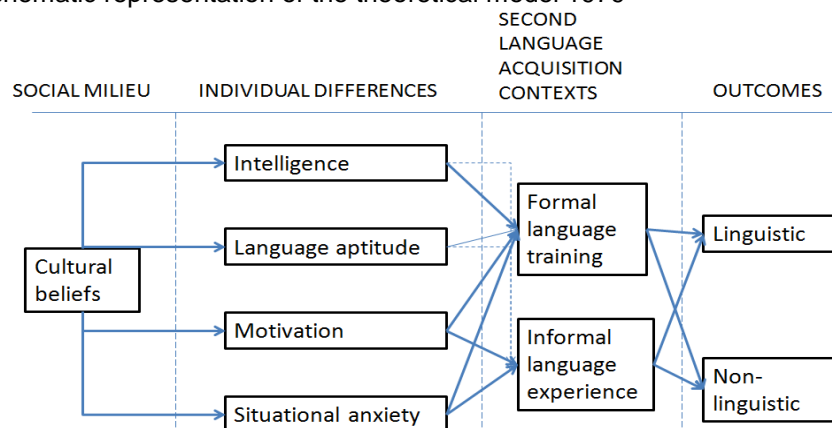


Figure 2 is a visual representation of the socio-educational model of 1979 (Gardner 1985: 147). The variable social milieu shows that language learning always takes place in a certain cultural context. Learners always have preexisting beliefs when starting to learn a language.

The subcategories for individual differences are intelligence, language aptitude, motivation and situational anxiety. Those differences are very important variables when it comes to influencing acquisition, because they influence achievement directly and determine how quickly and well learners understand language structures or language tasks. The individual differences correlate with each other; especially intelligence and language aptitude. Motivation, in this case, is defined as “the effort, want (desire), and affect associated with learning a second language and is seen as important in determining how actively the individual works to acquire language material” (Gardner 1985: 147).

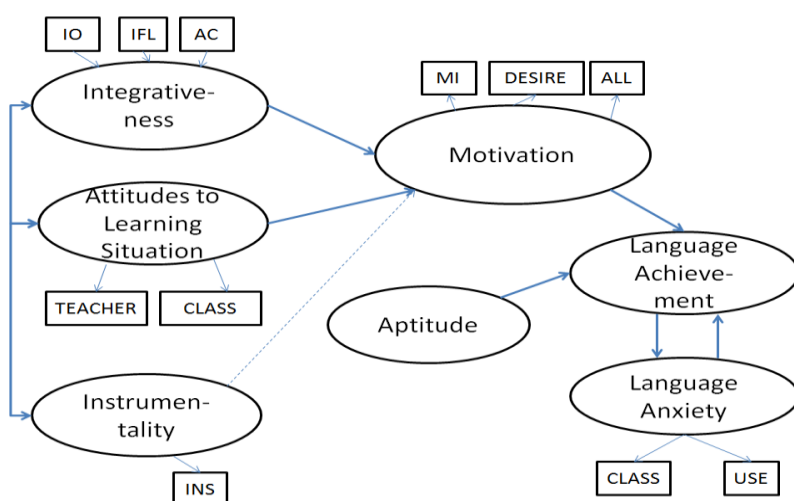
The second language acquisition context, the next variable, is the surrounding in which learning takes place. The distinction that is made is the formal or informal context in which a learner can find him- or herself. Formal contexts are referring to situations where language learning is instructed or explicit training or explanations are involved, for instance a language classroom. An informal context on the other hand, is more related to acquisition, rather than learning. Instruction does not play a primary role, but learners are exposed to the language, which could happen while listening to the radio, watching a movie, or interacting with others.

The outcomes are seen as the result of learning and they depend on the language acquisition context. If an outcome is a linguistic one, a learner has

knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation etc., everything that is connected to language proficiency. Non-linguistic outcomes, on the other hand, are values, attitudes and so forth. Both kinds of outcomes can result from both acquisition contexts.

According to this model, motivation is one element that influences language learning and is part of a “dynamic causal interplay of individual difference variables interacting with environmental and acquisition contexts resulting in both linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes” (Gardner 1985: 165). The model has been modified several times and a number of studies have elaborated on the concept of motivation within the model. Since Gardner states that motivation in this context “refers to the driving force in any situation” (2010: 89), the motivational aspect will be explained in more detail. Figure 3 gives an overview of the role of motivation in the socio-educational model according to Gardner in 2006 (2010: 88).

Figure 3 A structural equation representation of the socio-educational model taken from Gardner (2006)



The explanation of the model will be based on Gardner (2010: 88 ff.). In this representation motivation can be supported by the concept of integrativeness, which is the ability and willingness to adopt features of another cultural community for the purpose of communicating with members of it, as well as the attitude to the learning situation. Hence, IO (integrative orientation), IFL (interest in foreign languages), and AC (attitudes towards different cultures) are components that make up integrativeness. Attitudes towards learning situations, on the other hand, refer to the learning contexts. In a school environment those attitudes can

be influenced by the teacher or the classmates, materials or even extracurricular activities. Instrumentality may influence motivation as well, although it is not considered as a direct or consistent support. It means that L2 learners do something because they obtain a reward for example. Tests have shown that instrumental motivation can be successful in language learning, however only as long as instrumental goals are achievable.

Integrativeness, attitudes to learning situations, and instrumentality do not only interact with each other, but also potentially support motivation. Motivation itself is considered as comprising MI (motivational intensity), i.e. how persistent and consistent the attempt of learning is or the effort in other words. DESIRE counts to striving for success and achieving goals. And third, attitudes towards learning a language (ALL) is also part of motivation, because the more positive one thinks about learning a language the better the results will be.

Motivation and aptitude then determine what the achievement will be, which is further influenced by language anxiety. Language class anxiety and language use anxiety are distinguished. Moreover, not only anxiety has impact on the achievement, but it is also the other way round with achievement impacting on anxiety.

The socio-educational model's attempt to describe motivation has discovered that motivation depends on many factors that are interrelated with each other. All the factors mentioned in the model are definitely relevant, but not complete; there are also other factors and links to consider, and Gardner admits that point. Furthermore, integrative motivation is stressed over instrumental motivation, because it shows longer lasting effects.

The concept of integrativeness as Gardner defines it is the genuine interest in the L2 and the native language community itself. It implies an openness and an identification to some degree with the members of this community. However, Dörnyei (2009a: 9 ff.) criticizes two problems inherent in this model. First, it does not offer links to recent cognitive motivational concepts such as goal theories or self-determination theory. And secondly, he also claims that the label "integrative" is limiting and is not comprehensible in language learning environments. He argues that it has an ambiguous meaning, since it is not quite clear

what the goal of integration is supposed to be; especially, when it comes to foreign language learning as a school subject without direct contact to members of the L2 community. Additionally the problem what the L2 community is presents itself as a particular challenge for the case of English (Dörnyei 2009a: 23 ff.). Moreover, the concept of integrativeness has lost importance in recent years of research.

Another model is the L2 motivational self system. It was developed after the socio-educational model and tried to overcome the difficulties of it, but also made use of its valuable findings.

4.2.5 The L2 Motivational Self System

The L2 motivational self system is a theory proposed by Dörnyei in 2005, which looks at L2 motivation within the “self” framework, revises perspectives on motivation, implements psychological theories of the self, but roots in previous motivation research in the L2 field. The foreign language is seen as more than a mere communication code that can be learnt similarly to other academic subjects. The theory adopts paradigms that link the L2 to the individual itself and thereby forming an important part of identity (Dörnyei 2009a: 9, Dörnyei 2009b: 214). This model connects further to more recent theories that motivation, identity and learner autonomy closely relate to one another (Gao & Lamb 2011: 1).

In order to find out how an L2 can affect an individual in his or her “core”, a personal self-concept has to be defined first. “A person’s self-concept has traditionally been seen as the summary of the individual’s self-knowledge related to how the person views him/herself at present” (Dörnyei 2009a: 11). As part of defining the self-concept Dörnyei has drawn on two theories about the possible selves. One basis was that of Markus and Nurius (1986 cited in Dörnyei 2009a: 12), who assumed the self-concept to concern information derived from past experiences, but also how people conceptualize their yet unrealized potential, which is then called future self-guides. They differentiate between an ideal self that we would very much like to become, the self that we could become, and the self we are afraid of becoming. Moreover, it has to be noted that those possible selves are reality for a person since they involve tangible images and senses,

such as the here-and-now-self. The other self-concept Dörnyei is referring to is the one of Higgins (1987; Higgins et al. 1985 cited in Dörnyei 2009a: 13), who differentiates between the ideal self and the ought self. The ideal self includes representations of the attributes one likes to possess, and the ought self refers to attributes that one believes one ought to have. According to Markus and Ruvolo (1989: 217 cited in Dörnyei 2009a: 13 ff.) possible selves can be seen as the result of various motivational factors; for instance, expectancies, attribution, or value beliefs.

Important factors for the L2 motivational self system are imagination and imagery to create an ideal self which also seems possible, because “possible selves are only effective inasmuch as the individual does indeed perceive them as possible” (Dörnyei 2009a: 19) and learners need a superordinate vision of keeping track of the learning process (ibid.: 25). Since Dörnyei criticized Gardner’s concept of the socio-educational model, another goal of the theory was to move beyond integrativeness. Referring to Dörnyei and Csizér (2002: 456), they claim that integrativeness is less an effort to integrate actually or metaphorically in an L2 community, but more a basic identification process within the individual’s self-concept (Dörnyei 2009a: 26). Therefore, a reinterpretation of integrativeness as the ideal L2 self is required:

Looking at ‘integrativeness’ from the self-perspective, the concept can be conceived of as the L2-specific facet of one’s ideal self: if our ideal self is associated with the mastery of an L2, that is, if the person that we would like to become is proficient in the L2, we can be described in Gardner’s (1985) terminology as having an integrative disposition (Dörnyei 2009a: 27).

Dörnyei takes those foundations to build up a new theory in language learning; the L2 motivational self system (2005). The theory is made up of the following three components:

1. The *Ideal L2 self* is the L2-specific aspect of one’s ‘ideal self’. The ideal L2 self is a powerful motivator to learn the L2, if a learner considers him- or herself as having mastered the foreign language, because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves. Traditional integrative and internalized instrumental motives would typically belong to this component.

2. The *Ought-to L2 self*, which concerns the attributes that one believes one should possess to meet expectations or to avoid possible negative outcomes (similar to Higgins's ought self). The more extrinsic (i.e. less internalized) types of instrumental motives belong to this category.
3. The *L2 learning experience* concerns motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience (e.g. the impact of the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, the experience of success). This component is on a different level than the two self-guides. There is still some research missing concerning this point (Dörnyei 2009a: 29; Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 86).

What can we draw from this model that is important for motivation? This model offers new perspectives on the topic, creating a language learning vision of the ideal L2 self that can act as an effective motivator if the learner has a desired future self-image which is elaborate, vivid and perceived as plausible. It also has to be in harmony with the expectations of the learner's social environment, or at least it should not differ considerably. Furthermore, the learner's working self-concept has to be regularly activated and accompanied by relevant and effective procedural strategies that act as a roadmap to pursue a goal. And it has to contain elaborate information about the negative consequences of not achieving the goals (Dörnyei 2009a: 32).

As a consequence for teaching a language this means that for creating an elaborate and vivid future self image the vision or imagery needs to be strengthened. Examples for imagery enhancements already exist in the field of sports, where imagery training for athletes helps to achieve higher goals, or in psychotherapy: positive imagery approach is used for healing mental disorders. (ibid.: 34 ff.) In turn, there is now a need of a vision to master a foreign language, which is not only effective when the individual sees it as possible , but it also requires combining it with concrete action plans (ibid.: 37)

On the whole, the L2 motivational self system presents itself as a completely different approach in comparison to linear theories. The possible self theory goes beyond logical, intellectual arguments when justifying the validity of the various future oriented self types (Dörnyei 2009a: 15). However, it does not invalidate previous convincing, psychological theories, but it even shows that oth-

er models and theories are compatible with it. Nevertheless, there seems to be a drawback when taking Zentner and Renaud's (2007 cited in Dörnyei 2009a: 38) argument into account that the model is not appropriate for pre-secondary students, because their self is not stable at that age.

4.3 Researching Motivation

Concluding from the findings of previously mentioned theories, it is obvious that research on motivation is still incomplete and in progress. There are clearly limitations to linear approaches of motivation; i.e. to predict that one kind of motivation leads to a certain learning behavior. It is rather the combination of multiple relational elements that are in interaction between individuals and contextual processes (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 75-78). This section tries to sum up the main points in order to create a basis for the empirical research.

Expectancy-value theories assume that motivation depends on the expected success and how much an individual values this success. Achievement motivation therefore, is considered as being part of the expectancy-value theory, because it also suggests success and achievement and the attached value as crucial factors for motivation. However, achievement motivation is concerned with the need for achievement as such, rather than the outcome of a task and furthermore considers the avoidance of failure as having an impact on motivation. Also attribution theory corresponds with expected success and its reasons, because it makes the assumption that success is causal to past experiences.

Goal theories expand expectancy-value theories to the extent that goals or outcomes of actions are important. It has to be noted here that goals are valuable motivational factors if they are specific and challenging and if the person is committed to achieving them. Furthermore, there is a difference between reaching goals for their own sake, or because earning reputation or some other reward from outside. As pointed out before, it is usually not only one goal that initiates action, but rather multiple goals.

Self determination theory, as another theory of motivation, distinguishes extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, as reasons for behavior, but it also indicates that

there can be a variation of different influences on one person. It suggests a continuum of controlled and uncontrolled factors that lead to the outcome of why a person is doing something.

The socio-educational model of Gardner presents motivation as influenced by several factors that are interrelated with each other; namely, integrativeness, attitudes to learning situations, and instrumentality. Especially the concept of integrativeness was an essential point to the model, which represents the skills and enthusiasm to adopt different cultural features. This model was one of the first ones to add a more dynamic and relational perspective to linear approaches, but also found opponents, largely because it neglected previous theories of motivation and the concept of integrativeness was not clear.

The L2 motivational self system is completely different compared to other theories. It is assumed that people have “possible selves” that are related to their personal potential and that this can be transferred into motivated behavior. Dörnyei postulates in his theory that there is an ideal L2 self, which can be seen as a powerful motivator to learn a language, in case a person sees him- or herself as someone able to speak the L2. The other self is the ought-to L2 self, which implies the attributes that one believes one should possess to meet expectations or to avoid possible negative outcomes. As third self concept the L2 learning experience involves the motives of language learning in connection with L2 learning environment and experience.

Now, taking into account what has been said about motivation in this chapter, it becomes obvious that measuring motivation turns out to be a challenging undertaking for three main causes; firstly, because motivation is abstract and not directly observable, secondly because it is a multifaceted construct, and thirdly motivation is inconsistent and dynamic (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 197 ff.). This is also a reason for the many different theories out there. Some motivational models only take part aspects of motivation into account, because of the multitude of potential determinants of human behavior. It was therefore necessary to include several theories and reduce the variables in order to be able to operationalize motivation for empirical testing (ibid.: 8). Motivation research in this study therefore picks up elements of all mentioned theories such as the socio-educational model and the L2- motivational self system. Variables that are test-

ed include aspects of effort and persistence, motives, attitude, and success and achievement.

Effort and persistence will be measured by the fact how long people use the platform, and how often and how long they study there. It is assumed that the more often and the longer people spend their time working and communicating on the platform, the higher is their motivation. Motives are the goals of taking actions and describe why people do something, which is a crucial part of goal theories (cf. chapter 4.2.2), but they also play an important role in self-determination theory and the concept of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (cf. chapter 4.2.3). In this research the focus lies on social, cultural, and professional motives. Furthermore, attitudes towards learning foreign languages as a further variable in the operationalization was drawn from the socio-educational model. And the last variable included success and achievement and how these aspects interact with motivation, as it is said to be important in the theory of achievement motivation (cf. chapter 4.2.1).

Summing it up, we can say that in order to measure motivation there is a need to establish what is meant by it (Gardner 2010: 107), which was the point of this chapter. Then we need to define the aspect of L2 learning of interest and the various motivational influences (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 199) in order to come up with a research plan. How these factors will be defined exactly, is outlined in the next chapter, which introduces the empirical part of this study.

5 Research Issues

This chapter presents the framework of the empirical part of this project. It gives an overview of the specific research questions, the aims and objectives of the study, the methods used in order to meet the goals and the design and application of the questionnaires. Furthermore, the exact functions of the testing environment, and the selection and details of the participants will be presented.

5.1 Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to find out how peer learning websites effect L2 learning motivation in general, and how this motivation can be transferred into a learning setting of a language class in particular. More precisely, the exact research questions that will be investigated in this study are:

1. How do peer learning websites affect the effort and persistence of language learning?
2. What motivates L2 learners to use peer learning websites?
3. Do users of peer learning websites actually succeed in reaching their goals?
4. How can peer learning websites be used in a language classroom of a school setting in order to increase motivation?

5.2 Aims and Objectives

The overall aim of this study is to investigate motivating factors of social media technologies and to find out how these factors are useful for language learning. More specifically, peer learning language websites are used as an example of social media technologies and *Livemocha.com*, as one chosen instant, serves as testing environment for learning about motivation of users. The study intends to find out how the motivational effects of peer learning websites can be transferred into language learning settings of a school context. Therefore, it combines findings in the area of CALL (computer-assisted language learning), social media, and motivation.

As already discussed in previous chapters, motivation is an essential factor in all kinds of learning processes. Also, the circumstance of how language is taught plays a role in relation with motivation (Gardner & Lambert 1972: 1). For this reason, a significant amount of research on language learning motivation has already been done; however research in the particular field of CALL and motivation seems to be rather rare. Nevertheless, teachers and learners should be aware of the potential that the internet and social media has on motivation and try to take advantage of it.

In order to meet the objectives of the study, the complex concept of motivation has to be defined and it has to be clear how it can be measured. The preceding definition argued for in chapter 4.1 shows that motivation implies persistence, effort, achievement and goals. The definition of Gardner (2010: 8) tells us that

Motivated individuals [...] express effort in attaining the goal, they show persistence, and they attend to the tasks necessary to achieve the goals. They have a strong desire to attain their goal, and they enjoy the activities necessary to achieve their goal. They are aroused in seeking their goals, they have expectancies about their successes and failures, and when they are achieving some degree of success they demonstrate self-efficacy; they are self-confident about their achievements. Finally, they have reasons for their behavior, and these reasons are often called motives.

Other theories add other significant aspects of possible selves or correlating factors that are cross-linked in a complex way. For this reason, the study aims at analyzing diverse possible motivational factors; namely persistence, achievement, desire, enjoyment, expectancies, goals, intrinsic reasons, extrinsic influences, attitudes, and possible selves. Thus, the thought that motivation is multidimensional and hence cannot be measured by one scale (ibid.: 8 ff.) has to be maintained. Investigating all of those factors contribute to achieving the main goal of the study; namely to find out how peer learning websites effect motivation.

5.3 Methodology

The method of enquiry is mainly quantitative. The reasons for this approach are diverse. First of all, the circumstances of the study require to test users of a website, who are most easily available online because they come from all over the world. Therefore, obtaining the data online excludes personal interviews that would mainly focus on the qualitative aspect. Secondly, although data could be gathered by asking people via the chat function, this requires an extensive amount of time, and the number of participants would be rather small. Consequently, a similar strategy to reach more people is to ask them closed-ended questions to get a more representative sample of pooled results that reflect the commonalities of the participants and use a “meaning in general” strategy (Dörnyei 2007: 27). In other words, the focus lies on the group of learners and

their communalities in motivation, rather than on individual characteristics or developmental patterns of members (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 202). Thirdly, the data is then more “systematic, rigorous, focused, and tightly controlled, involving precise measurement and producing reliable and replicable data that is generalizable to other contexts” (Dörnyei 2007: 34). However, in order not to neglect the qualitative value that might be behind certain opinions, the study will also analyze aspects by using open-ended and non-numerical data collection and possibilities for participants to express their own views. These questions enrich the data when meaningfully combined with quantitative results, but usually take up precious “respondent-availability time” (Dörnyei 2010: 37) and they are more difficult to code. On the basis of these considerations, a questionnaire was chosen to collect the required data.

While doing the research, I conformed to ethical principles (Dörnyei 2010: 79). No harm was done to the participants. The respondents’ right to privacy was respected since they were able to participate voluntarily and could stop any time they wanted. If they decided to participate, they were provided with sufficient information about the survey and for what purpose the data was used. Furthermore, everybody was able to participate anonymously.

The following subsections present more comprehensively how the study is built up in detail.

5.3.1 *Livemocha.com* as testing environment

The survey was carried out within the website *Livemocha.com*, because similar to social networking sites (SNS), it is the world’s largest online language learning community, with more than 15 million members from over 195 countries involving a collaborative approach to language learning, which is also called peer learning (<http://livemocha.com/pages/about-us/>, 18 Jan. 2013). Amongst those 15 million language learners, there are 8,865,692 English learners, according to the Director of Marketing of *Livemocha* (e-mail correspondence, 22 Jan. 2013). The platform was also used because it is a safer environment than a SNS or other forms of social media, since it features a community of people who are

interested in language learning. Furthermore, *Livemocha* was willing to cooperate in doing research on the platform.

The second question worth considering when analyzing the motivation of users is, how *Livemocha* builds up their language courses and the website in general to foster language learning. *Livemocha* offers the possibility to learn 38 languages with a methodology that can be considered close to communicative language learning.

A learner can watch people speak a new language, memorize all of the grammar rules, and talk about the language ad nauseam. But to truly *speak* a language, a learner must actually try it out with a partner. Real conversational fluency takes good instruction, a dose of courage, and a lot of real-life practice
(<http://livemocha.com/pages/methodology/>, 18 Jan. 2013).

Figure 4 Profile Page of *livemocha.com*



Figure 4 shows the profile page of the websites that gives an overview of all the functions and possibilities; namely to complete a language course, to chat with members, to explore culture, or to correct the exercises of others. Furthermore, the user can check the credit points available, how many friends he or she has, try to contact new people that learn the same languages, or get updates on other users' activities.

The language courses are made up of building blocks including activity sets, which are usually composed of three steps. First demonstration, where learners

listen to or watch a native speaker-conversation and complete short exercises to ensure comprehension. The next step is deconstruction, where the situation is broken down into its vocabulary and grammar parts. And finally, the next component is practice with interactive activities. Language courses are organized into beginners, intermediate, and advanced levels. They can include video dialogs (with subtitles and transcriptions), grammar explanations and activities, vocabulary quizzes, reading exercises, role plays with the option of recording and practicing pronunciation, and writing tasks.

The philosophy of *Livemocha* is peer learning. To make it possible for users to conduct language courses, they need points. Those points can be either bought, or earned by helping others learn your own native language. Finished exercises can be sent to people who speak the respective language in order to get feedback from them, which helps the learners increasing their language proficiency and the teachers in earning points.

Apart from the language courses, members of *Livemocha* can use the chat or messaging function in order to communicate with people from all over the world, similar to SNS. Another function allows members to explore other cultures. This is comparable to *Facebook* posts. People can publish pictures or write about their traditions, cities, countries, food etc. and other can comment or like them.

Additionally, *Livemocha* offers live instructor-led classes, private tutoring, or business solutions, which will not be considered for the purpose of this study.

5.3.2 Questionnaire Design

As mentioned before, a questionnaire was used to gather the required data for this study. The reasons for making this choice are that they are “easy to construct, extremely versatile, and uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in a form that is readily processable” (Dörnyei 2010: xiii). Furthermore, they provide a good solution for reaching online users and when thinking of a cost-benefit consideration, they are efficient in research time, effort and financial resources (ibid.: 6). For those reasons, the free *ÖH-WU* survey tool “JUSSUV 0.8.9” of the student’s union of the Vienna University of Econom-

ics and Business was used to create an online questionnaire (<http://umfrage.oeh-wu.at/>, 11 Feb. 2013).

The following features of the questionnaire design are based on Dörnyei (2010: 11-82) unless indicated otherwise. Naturally, the data obtained has to remain confidential; therefore, the questionnaires were handled anonymously. Moreover, the

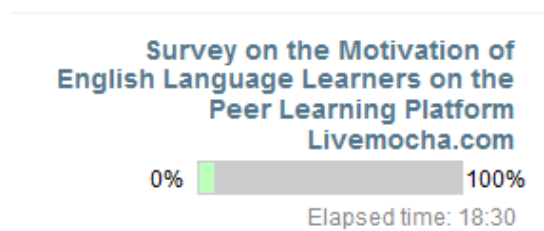


Figure 5 Process Indicator

length of the questionnaires was rather tricky. How many questions can be asked in order to cover the most essential parts and at the same time to keep it as short as possible to engage as many website users as possible? Most authors claim that researchers tend to use too many, rather than not enough questions. For this reason the questionnaire for this research was kept as short as possible and was also characterized by sequence marking; i.e. arranging it into separate parts to appear more structured. Couper, Traugott and Lamias (2001: 232 ff.) also recommend to include a process indicator for the purpose of length, so that participants are informed about their progress and do not drop out too early. The questionnaire used in this survey used the process indicator is shown in Figure 5.

In general, it is known that response rates for online surveys are lower than paper-and-pencil surveys (Umbach 2004: 27, Millar & Dillman 2011: 250). There are certain guidelines for increasing online survey return rates though, such as prizes or money in return for participating, multiple attempts to ask the target group and of course also length and layout plays a certain role. A rule of thumb is that the less effort a participant needs to spend, the more likely he or she is to participate. Hence, clicking boxes might bring more and better results than if people are required to write pages. This, however, also involves some dangers; namely that answers might be marked by simplicity and superficiality. Moreover, there is no way to prove whether respondents understood the items or accidentally made mistakes. Also, there is always the danger that people are not answering honestly, for instance because they want to appear better than they are, which is called the social desirability bias or the problem of self deception, which means that people always have a different self image than they appear to

others. How those problems and suggestions are tackled, will be elaborated on more thoroughly in the next section.

The main questions were drawn from already existing test batteries on motivation, since those items have already been tested and there is no need to invent them completely anew (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011:265). At the same time, it is also correctly assumed in motivational research that “no battery can be used mechanically (i.e. without making considerable adjustments in contexts other than where it was developed” (ibid.). Therefore, the sample questions were taken from two main sources in an attempt to compensate for limitations of each. The motivation questionnaire used by Taguchi et al. (2009) and the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) by Gardner (2004). The items were directly transferred into the questionnaire, but rephrased according to the standards of Dörnyei (2010: 39-44). The potential criterion variables measured are effort, persistence, achievement, motives, and goals with regard to the socio-educational model (cf. chapter 4.2.4) (Gardner 2006) as well as the L2-self system (cf. chapter 4.2.5) (Dörnyei 2009a). Furthermore, I added some items specific for motivation on the subject of *Livemocha.com* (cf. appendix A).

5.3.3 Item Design

The items used in the questionnaire include both closed ended and open ended questions. In order to avoid fatigue effects the questionnaire features various item designs. Especially, radio buttons, which are boxes that allow the respondent to choose only one answer, turned out to be useful because participants can answer very easily and it can be predetermined whether it is possible to choose one or more responses (Couper, Traugott & Lamias 2001: 236). In general, online surveys offer greater possibilities to be more refined in appearance than paper surveys (Umbach 2004: 24 ff.).

Part A includes questions based on the Likert-scale, named after its inventor Rensis Likert, as one of the most common techniques (Dörnyei 2010: 27). In this way answers can be quickly given, but are still individualized to some degree. Test persons can decide to which extent they agree or disagree with a statement ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The items were

both negatively and positively keyed in order to overcome the acquiescence bias, which describes the tendency of people to rather agree than disagree with statements (Dörnyei 2010: 9). The single items have been previously categorized, as can be seen in chapter 6.1, and then mixed up randomly. Moreover, multi-item screens, i.e. three statements grouped together, were used because they appear less burdensome for participants (Couper, Traugott & Lamias 2001: 245).

Figure 6 Questionnaire Part A

Click the box you agree with the most. You can only choose one box. Note: Please answer honestly. There is no right or wrong answer.

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
1. I work hard to learn English. *)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I would like to learn many foreign languages. *)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Studying English is important because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people. *)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Part B items were also based on the Likert-scale, but ranging from one description to its opposite as it is used in the Mini-AMTB (Gardner 2010: 132 ff.)

Figure 7 Questionnaire Part B

19. My attitude towards learning English in general is... *)

☐ negative
 ☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐ positive

Part C consists of items that allow participants of the study to freely write answers. Nonetheless, for some of the questions preset options are given in order to offer some ideas and to reduce the effort for the participants. Figure 8 serves as an example how open-ended questions have been used in the questionnaire.

Figure 8 Questionnaire Part C

27. Give reasons why you learn English on livemocha.com.

☐ I don't like language classes.
 ☐ I don't have the opportunity to attend a language class.
 ☐ Language software is expensive.
 ☐ I can get in contact with people from all over the world.
 ☐ Livemocha.com is interactive.
 ☐ I can study at home.

Other reasons?

The last part consists of items about personal details in order to find out about the participants' language proficiency level², user habits, and personal information.

5.3.4 Participants/Sample

The sample taken for the study includes users of the website studying English as a foreign language. The procedure of sampling used was convenience or opportunity sampling (Dörnyei 2010: 61), which is principally the selection of the population due to certain practical criteria. In this case, people who are available on the learning platform and meet the selection criteria were chosen for the study.

The participants taking part in the study were treated anonymously. However, in order to avoid that participants took the survey more than one time, the survey tool allowed to have insight to IP-addresses and indicated when the same addresses showed up twice.

In order to increase return rates several measurements have been taken. Firstly, *Livemocha* agreed to post the link to the survey on their *Facebook* page. Secondly, users were asked to participate via the message function and thirdly, they were asked to participate in chat conversations. Millar and Dillman (2011: 267) have found out that a mixed mode administration of a survey can increase responses; therefore I used different ways of reaching users. Although the search for participants was possible to do online, it turned out to be quite time-consuming and ineffective to persuade users to participate in the study. After a couple of minutes chatting with people it often turned out that they were not interested in taking part in the survey. Also actions like follow-up reminders (Dörnyei 2010: 66; Umbach 2004: 31) did not always bring the expected return rates. I tried to befriend people on the website and ask them twice or three times. Online surveys may be regarded as an invasion of privacy (Umbach 2004: 27), and people are used to ignoring mass mailings, since they are ubiquitous. However, the idea that personalized incentives are more effective (ibid.:

² Language proficiency levels have been used according to livemocha.com: Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, Fluent

32 ff.), was also experienced in this study. People sometimes wanted to make sure that there was no commercial purpose behind this survey.

The number of users, who participated was 156. Since it is hard to define the right amount of participants for the study and there are several opinions on that given in the literature, the sample size was kept to a manageable scope. 82 out of those 156 participants were female and 74 male users participated. The average age was 27. 69.6% of the total population was aged 16-28 leaving 30.4% for the 28-73 year olds. All respondents spoke 44 different native languages.

5.4 Limitations

While the study tries to stick closely to scientific guidelines, there are some limitations and problems to consider for this project.

The first issue is that the study measures the self-perception of users. This does not only apply to their motivation, but also to the success they claim to have. So a user might perceive him- or herself as successful in learning the language, but is actually not. Therefore, the study only reflects what users think of themselves, rather than taking an objective point of view. Furthermore, the number of participants is rather small in relation to the total amount of English learners of the website, which according to *Livemocha* is 8,865,692. Therefore, representativeness has to be questioned and it has to be taken into consideration that the study is not generalizable to the whole population.

The next difficulty that needs to be addressed is sampling. There is clearly a problem of self-selection, meaning that only people who are very motivated, participated in the study, (Dörnyei 2010: 63; Lowie & Seton: 2013: 54), leaving out people who are not motivated or fond of the platform. However, this was the only way to conduct the survey and the results therefore mirror the attitude of the sample group. Consequently, they cannot necessarily be generalized to a larger population for this reason as well.

It has to be noted that the survey was conducted in an EFL context and the questionnaires were sent out in English, as there would have been too many different L1s to translate the questionnaire into. For this reason, it was assumed

that only people whose level of English was high enough to understand the questionnaire participated. Possibilities for asking further questions were given, but very few people opted for them.

Another remark to what the study is and is not concerns the frame of the research. According to the research questions the study tries to find out about what motivates learners to use peer learning platforms, how they are motivated and if they are successful in doing so. Hence, it represents the correlation of those factors relating to the learning platform and it does not provide any comparison to other forms of learning; as for example language learning software or school settings. The implications, how peer learning websites can be used in a “normal” language classroom is then derived from the findings of the results. After all, the study does not intend to investigate how learning platforms work in schools, since the scope of the study is too small to include this kind of research as well. A comparative research and longitudinal study would be required.

A rather big problem for this study and web related studies in general is that the results might be outdated fairly quickly since websites change constantly. Consequently, it was not considered necessary to analyze all features and sub features of the webpage in detail, because they do not remain the same. At the same time, even if features of websites change, the general outcome of motivation on peer learning platforms should describe how motivation is built up and how it is applicable for other learning environments.

5.5 Piloting the Study

Before conducting the study, the questionnaire was piloted as it is frequently suggested in the literature (Dörnyei 2010; Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011; Sealey 2010: 30). A group of 15 people, including colleagues as well as people who are not familiar with linguistics and who have different language proficiency levels was asked to do a test run in order to find out how clear the statements were formulated and to bring in different perspectives.

One main reason for piloting the study was to calculate the average time a person needed to go through the questionnaire, which resulted in 8.15 minutes.

The other main reason was to find out if the results can later be processed with a computer program, which worked well in general. A few changes had to be made after the test run. The changes largely concerned technical difficulties such as changing checkboxes or radio buttons. There were also a couple of changes in layout, explaining footnotes in a more detailed way, indicating the possibility to click one or multiple items or rephrasing instructions.

On the whole, the test run was very useful and brought helpful feedback, because it showed insights to details I had overlooked in the beginning. It was further useful to check if I could process the data and receive an outside perspective how people understand the instructions.

5.6 Analysis

Checking the validity of the questionnaires was only restricted to open-ended questions, meaning to check if the given answers really answered the respective questions and could be used for evaluation. It was not necessary for closed-ended questions, since the questionnaire required those as mandatory items with restricted radio buttons and checkboxes. From the initial analysis it was concluded that all questionnaires were valid even though open questions were not consistently answered and 156 questionnaires were included in the statistical analysis and interpretation. The questionnaires, created with the help of the ÖH-WUumfrage tool (<http://umfrage.oeh-wu.at/>, 11 Feb. 2013) converted the data into tables and it was possible to transfer and process it automatically with the program SPSS.

Since Part A and Part B consisted of closed-ended questions, the analysis of the data was handled in a quantitative manner with descriptive statistical methods. Part C on the other hand was made up of mainly open-ended, but also some closed-ended questions, which were analyzed with qualitative and quantitative methods. The analysis was hence split up into separate parts. Concerning the operationalization, each item was turned into a variable, which again has been categorized according to the scoring procedure of the AMBT (Gardner 2010: 130 ff.) and the L2 motivational self system (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 276).

The decision on which statistical tests to use depends on the quality of the data. Comparing means with parametric tests t-test, which are frequently used, requires normally distributed data (i.e. a more or less symmetrical distribution around the center of the scores) (Field 2009: 18). If this is not the case, non-parametric tests are needed. After checking the assumptions of normal distribution and homogeneity of variance, interval data, and independence, as they are required for parametric tests (Lowie & Seton 2013: 46 ff., Field 2009: 133), it has been noticed that the data was abnormally distributed. Therefore, I tried to do test runs with both parametric and non-parametric tests which revealed that the outcomes are almost the same. Nevertheless, I opted for non-parametric tests in order to avoid wrong assumptions, since non-parametric tests “make fewer assumptions about the type of data on which they can be used” (Field 2009: 540). The non-parametric Mann-Whitney U-test with two independent samples was used as an alternative for the parametric independent t-test to compare the means of two conditions (ibid.). The level of significance or the p-value was set at $p \leq 0.05$ according to convention and Fisher’s suggestion (Field 2005: 25). The p-value indicates a higher significance, the lower it is.

6 Results

In order to structure this section, the results are presented according to the different parts of the questionnaire. Parts A and B were analyzed quantitatively and Part C was measured with qualitative and quantitative methods. Before going into detail, a general summary with the most significant facts is presented which will be the descriptive part, followed by a more detailed analysis and comparison according to groups of motivated and less-motivated learners in order to discover the most relevant differences.

6.1 Part A

Part A of the questionnaire consisted of 18 items; statements that participants needed to answer according to a Likert-scale, ranging from 1 “strongly disagree” to 6 “strongly agree” and from 6 “strongly disagree” to 1 “strongly agree” for negatively keyed items. Furthermore, two items were assigned to a category relating to either Gardner’s socio-educational model, or to Dörnyei’s L2 self (cf. Table 1). The summary of the most striking issues is presented in the form of a table with the help of descriptive statistics. The mean was calculated and the standard deviation, which shows “how well the mean represents the data” (Field 2005: 6). The smaller the deviation, the more does the individual data points represent the mean. The standard error is an additional means of describing the data. It demonstrates the standard deviation of the sampling distribution, i.e. the differences within sample means of this population. The higher it is, the more variability between samples and the less likely it represents the population (Field 2005: 17).

The overall findings show that each category was rated rather high with only few exceptions (cf. Table 1). The categories with the highest ratings were “Attitudes towards learning English” and “Integrative orientation” including the following items ordered according to descending means:

- a) Learning English is a waste of time.*
- b) Studying English is important because I will be able to interact more easily with speakers of English.
- c) Studying English is important because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people.
- d) I plan to learn as much English as possible.

* negatively keyed item

“Attitudes towards learning English” is the highest rated category in comparison to the others and relates to enjoyment that is connected to the learning process of the language (Gardner 2010: 123). The category “Integrative Orientation” tells that respondents value learning English because of communicative purposes that “satisfy social as opposed to purely instrumental objectives” (ibid:

116). If we look at the ratings for instrumental orientation, we can see that those ratings are indeed a little lower.

The categories “Ought-to L2 self” and “Achievement” were scored most negatively and have been listed here by the item people most strongly disagreed with first.

- a) I study English because my friends or my family think it is important.
- b) Life is harder, if I am not able to speak English.
- c) I think I can learn more on livemocha.com than in a regular English classroom or language software.
- d) I feel I made progress on my English since I have started using livemocha.com

The ought-to L2 self represents the motivation that learners have because they want to avoid negative consequences or to please other people (Dörnyei 2009a: 29). This kind of extrinsic motivation seems to be rather low, especially when the motivation comes from an outside force from friends or family. Also achievement was not rated very high. This category though was not drawn from an existing model, but was included in the questionnaire in specific relation to this research project.

Table 1 – Summary of the findings of Part A of the questionnaire (mean (M), standard deviation (SD), standard error (SE), N= 156)

Category	Items	M \bar{x}	(SD)	SE**
Motivational intensity	1. I work hard to learn English.	4.40	(1.37)	.109
	7. I don't pay much attention to the feedback I receive from peer learners.*	4.37	(1.52)	.122
Desire to learn English	4. I have a strong desire to know all aspects of English.	5.03	(1.09)	.087
	8. I haven't got any great wish to learn more than the basics of English.*	5.31	(1.20)	.096
Integrative orientation	3. Studying English is important because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people.	5.48	(0.99)	.079
	5. Studying English is important because I will be able to interact more easily with speakers of English.	5.56	(0.87)	.070
Interest in foreign languages	2. I would like to learn many foreign languages.	5.05	(1.34)	.081
	9. Studying foreign languages is not enjoyable.*	5.45	(1.01)	.107
Attitudes towards learning English	6. I plan to learn as much English as possible.	5.47	(0.87)	.070
	10. Learning English is a waste of time.*	5.71	(1.00)	.080
Instrumental orientation	13. Studying English is important because I will need it for my career.	5.28	(1.10)	.088
	14. Studying English is important because it will be useful in getting a good job.	5.29	(1.14)	.091
Ideal L2 self	15. Whenever I think of my future career, I imagine myself using English.	4.93	(1.24)	.099
	16. I can imagine myself speaking English as if I were a native speaker.	5.13	(1.15)	.092
Ought-to L2 self	11. I study English because my friends or my family think it is important.	2.10	(1.49)	.119
	12. Life is harder, if I am not able to speak English.	4.02	(1.55)	.124
Achievement	17. I feel I made progress with my English since I have started using <i>livemocha.com</i>	4.47	(1.34)	.107
	18. I think I can learn more on <i>livemocha.com</i> than in a regular English classroom or language software.	4.02	(1.37)	.110

\bar{x} 1=strongly disagree, 2= moderately disagree, 3= slightly disagree, 4= slightly agree, 5= moderately agree, 6=strongly agree

* 1= strongly agree, 2= moderately agree, 3=slightly agree, 4=slightly disagree, 5= moderately disagree, 6=strongly disagree

** Standard Error = the standard deviation of sample means (Field 2009: 43)

p<0.05

Since the items were taken to a large extent from test batteries and always two items were supposed to represent one category influencing motivation, a correlation analysis of items of the same category was done, in order to show the relationship between those two variables. Results lie between +1 and -1. A result that is +1 means that there is a perfect correlation between the two items and a result at -1 indicates no correlation at all (Field 2009: 170). Moreover, correlations were rated as highly significant if the p-value was lower than 0.01 and as significant if the p-value was lower than 0.05.

Table 2 Pearson Correlations of items falling into one category

Category	Pearson Correlation
Motivational Intensity	.029
Desire to learn English	-.008
Integrative Orientation	.547**
Interest in Foreign Languages	.093
Attitudes towards Learning English	.302**
Instrumental Orientation	.859**
Ideal L2-Self	.444**
Ought-to L2-Self	.229*
Achievement	.362**

** Pearson correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). N=156

* Pearson correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). N=156

Looking at the results, there is only one negative number for “Desire to learn English,” which is however not significant. The items

4. I have a strong desire to know all aspects of English.
8. I haven't got any great wish to learn more than the basics of English.*

apparently have brought different outcomes. However, -.008 is still close to 0 and therefore not completely different. All other items are positive, but results “Motivational intensity” and “Interest in Foreign languages” are still rather low. Items that correlated the most are “Ideal L2-Self”, “Integrative Orientation” and with .859 “Instrumental orientation” containing items:

13. Studying English is important because I will need it for my career.
14. Studying English is important because it will be useful in getting a good job.

The correlation analysis shows that even though items are supposed to represent one motivational category they cannot represent it coherently, but each item is a little different in terms of what it describes within the category. The outcomes are also understandable, since the questions differ within the categories. Nevertheless, it was useful to conduct this analysis, since a completely negative correlation would have indicated contradictory answers.

6.2 Part B

Part B consisted of seven statements that respondents needed to assess and evaluate according to a Likert-scale ranging from 1 “*negative / not helpful / low / not important / not true*” to 7 “*positive / helpful / high / important / true*”.

Table 3 – Summary of the findings of Part B of the questionnaire mean (M), standard deviation (SD), standard error (SE); N= 156)

Items	M \bar{x}	(SD)	SE
19. My attitude towards learning English in general is... (negative – positive)	6.43	(0.94)	.075
20. Learning English with the help of other users is... (not helpful – helpful)	6.53	(0,77)	.061
21. Giving feedback to other users is.... (not helpful – helpful)	6.21	(1.05)	.084
22. My interest in getting to know the English speaking culture is... (low – high)	6.00	(1.18)	.095
23. Getting to know people online is... (not important – important)	5.54	(1.49)	.119
24. I am successful learning English on livemocha.com (not true – true)	5.36	(1.59)	.127
25. My motivation to learn English on livemocha.com is... (low – high)	5.48	(1.34)	.107

Likert-scale ranging from 1-7

As listed in Table 3 3, the highest rated item with a mean of 6.53 was number 20 “*Learning English with the help of other users is...not helpful-helpful.*” with a relatively low standard deviation and standard error. Thus, the peer learning function seems to be an important factor for most users of the website. Moreover, giving feedback to other users is regarded as rather helpful. Furthermore,

the English learning attitude is relatively high as well with a mean score of 6.43 and a standard deviation of 0.94 and a standard error of 0.75.

However, the success that people think they are achieving on the website is scored lower, since statement 24 "*I am successful learning English on livemocha.com...not true – true.*" was rated with a mean of 5.36, which was the lowest rating in this section. Nevertheless, it has to be mentioned that it also has the highest standard deviation (1.59).

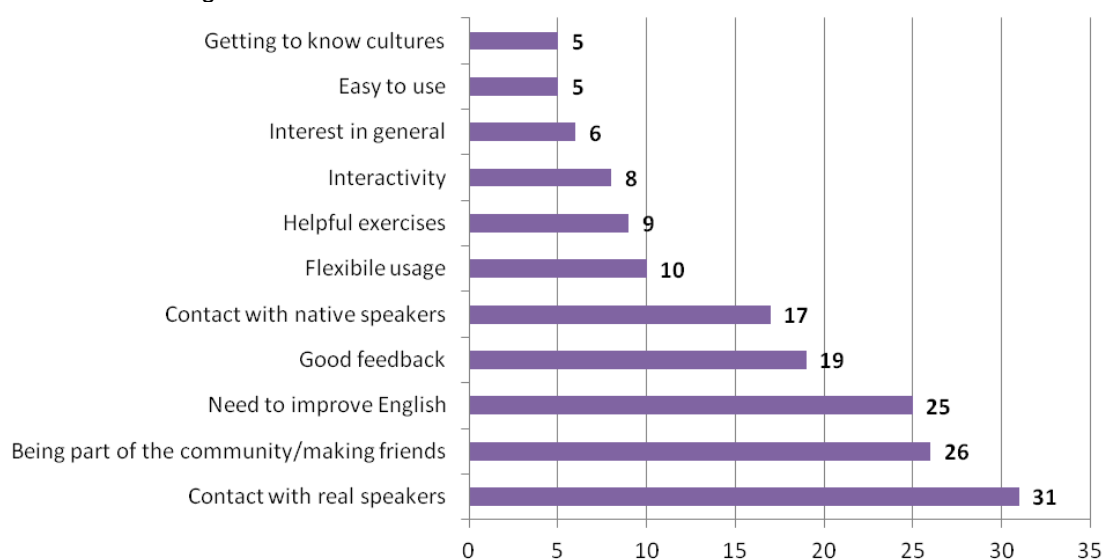
Concluding the findings, learning together with other users, feedback and the own attitude of English learning were rated rather positive. Generally, all statements received mean scores above 5.36, which is high on a scale of 7.

6.3 Part C

Part C of the questionnaire contained multiple choice items and open questions. In order to be able to present a summary of the collected data, worded sets of responses have been coded and sorted into categories. Naturally, those categories do not describe every single aspect participants included in their answers. However, a few sample answers and qualitative explanations give more insight into this part of the results.

It also has to be added that open questions were not mandatory and therefore, not all participants responded to those questions. The answers presented here, therefore do not represent the whole sample and were indicated in number of respondents rather than percentages.

Figure 9 Responses to question 26a „Why is your motivation for learning English on livemocha.com high?” in numbers



The answers of respondents show that the communication with real speakers is an important factor for their motivation. 31 people state this as a reason. Moreover, 26 like to be part of the online community and 17 say that they like the contact with native speakers, which could also be counted to the first category. Getting to know other cultures and giving and receiving feedback are further reasons that go together with social contact on the website. Other important factors are the personal need to improve one's English and the flexibility of the website, meaning that it can be used at different times and places. In general, the possibility to talk and work together with other people is seen as an essential motivating influence from peer learning websites.

A few answers were not included in the graph, because they were only mentioned fewer than five times. Those answers included that the website is fun, the possibility to learn many languages, the free usage, that people like the token/reward system, the opportunity of revising and repeating things learnt elsewhere and therefore complementing other studies, the professionalism of the website and the safe environment referring to a space where they can meet strangers with the same interests and without feeling insecure.

To illustrate some important responses, a few are selected here:

I like earning points and tokens to be used for advanced practice, and I like being part of the online community. (No. 11, female Spanish native speaker)

Because livemocha.com lets you know native speakers and talk with them. And they can correct your exercises, which is very important in my opinion. (No. 47, male Catalan native speaker)

My motivation for learning English on livemocha is very high because it allows to me at the same time to learn all aspects of English language and also to practice it within members. (No. 48, female Arabic native speaker)

Figure 10 Responses to question 26b „Why is your motivation for learning English on livemocha.com not high?” in numbers



Most people who rated their motivation as rather low for learning English on *Livemocha*, said that this lack of motivation is only true for learning English. They actually focus on learning other languages, since they are already fluent in English. However, a couple of people also made bad experiences with peer learners, since they did not receive helpful feedback or did not find friends on the websites, which led to a low motivation. 6 people also mentioned that they found the exercises on *Livemocha* not helpful, but rather repetitive and not suited for advanced learners or they did not succeed in their learning goals.

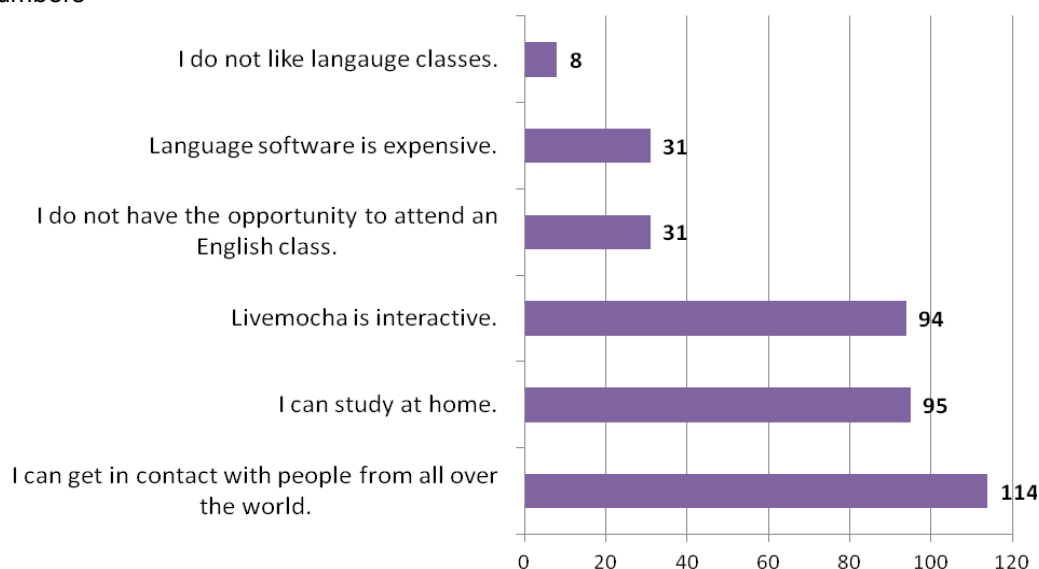
Well, actually I studied English in school, during my studies and while I have been working in English speaking countries, so I just use Livemocha for other languages as well as to get in touch with other people. (No. 90, male German native speaker)

My motivation is not high because when I started on Livemocha my English level was already intermediate to advanced and the lessons they have there are pretty basic and repetitive. The only thing good is to be able to talk and have the feedback from native speakers or English speakers in general. [...] (No. 136, male Portuguese native speaker)

Three other answers not included in the graph were that the use of *Livemocha* is boring, they are not motivated to proceed because they lack technical equipment at home or because of other personal reasons.

It was also asked why people decided to learn English on *Livemocha*. Responses to this question have been summarized in figure 11.

Figure 11 Responses to question 27 “Give reasons why you learn English on livemocha.com.” in numbers



From six previously stated reasons why people use the website 114 participants out of 156 chose the option “I can get in contact with people from all over the world.” More than 90 appreciate that they can study at home and the website’s interactivity. Only 20% of the population use the platform because it is an alternative to English courses or language learning software. Just 8 people do not like language classes, and therefore prefer peer learning platforms.

The request to state other reasons brought the following answers. Most people stressed the direct contact with native speakers followed by their learning progress. Furthermore, people use it for reasons that it’s cheap and flexible and because they appreciate receiving feedback. Fun on the website, an easy usage, contact with other cultures, the possibility to learn many languages and helpful exercises were also mentioned as reasons.

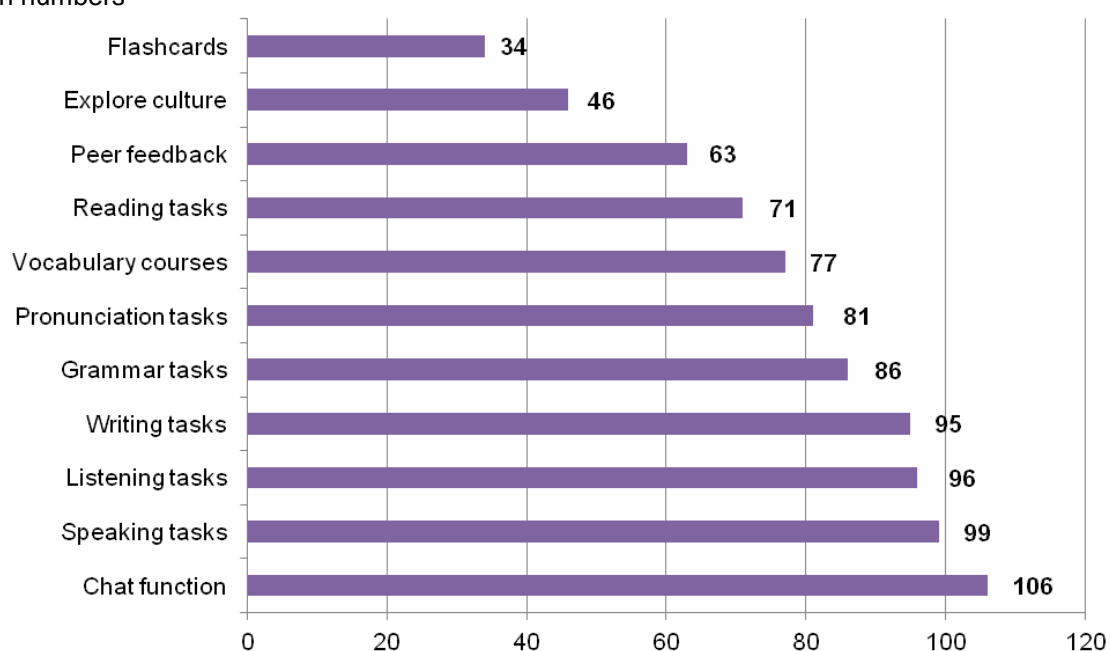
Again, some excerpts of user’s responses:

I have no time to attend courses and have no possibilities to speak or write with native speakers, so I find *Livemocha* as good compromise. (No. 148, female Slovak native speaker)

I can practice my English on *Livemocha* when chatting with people. (No. 118, male Arabic native speaker)

Figure 12 displays the various functions and tools of *Livemocha* people find helpful.

Figure 12 Responses to question 28 “What parts of livemocha.com do you find most helpful?” in numbers



The most successful function rated by respondents was the chat function. 106 out of the total sample (N=156) agreed with that. Speaking, listening, and writing tasks were rated as the second best functions; all with a number over 90. Grammar tasks were considered to be helpful by 86 people. Vocabulary flashcards and the explore culture function received the lowest scores. Interestingly, peer feedback was only selected by 63 people, although social contact was rated very high in other questions, which suggests that people value communication more than pure learning functions.

Other functions that members added that were not on the list were the video chat function, the *Facebook* site of *Livemocha*, correcting other submissions and the combination of all functions.

I cannot decided, it is so complex .That's why it is so good. (No. 64, male Hungarian native speaker.)

According to question 29, whether users would recommend *Livemocha* to others, 149 answered with “yes”; 3 people would not recommend it and 4 people did not answer the question.

Only one person of the group who answered with “no” stated a reason, which was that he does not like the fact that some functions are not for free. People who would recommend the page, would mostly do so because of the possibility to be in contact with other language learners and native speakers, and also because it is a cheap way of learning a language.

Part C shows that social contact and learning from others influences motivation to a great extent. In fact, that is what respondents think. Success takes a minor part in the motivational analysis.

6.4 Comparative Findings of Motivated and Less-Motivated Learners

By contrasting and comparing motivated with less-motivated learners, differences can be discovered more easily between extreme cases than with a simple descriptive analysis including all responses. In order to see differences between motivated and less-motivated learners, the sample has been divided into two groups according to perceived motivation; group 1 are the motivated learners and group 2 less-motivated learners. For the selection of the groups question 25 “*My motivation to learn English on Livemocha.com is.... high-low*”, served as an indicator whether participants felt they were motivated or not. The answers were ranged from 1 (low) to 7 (high) according to a Likert-scale. The results were rather high with a mean of 5,48 and a median of 6. Group 1 (N= 88), therefore, includes all responses above the mean and median including 6, and group 2 (N= 68) includes all respondents who gave answers from 1 to 5.

Most items of part A did not show a significant contrast of the two groups, except for items 16, 17 and 18 concerning the ideal L2-self and learning achievement on the platform. Tables 4, 5 and 6 show statistically significant difference between the groups of motivated and less-motivated learners.

Table 4 shows that almost 60% of the motivated group can imagine themselves learning English to a native speaker degree and an additional 23.9% moderately agree with this statement, which are 83% in total. In comparison, less-motivated learners agree less strongly with this idea.

Table 4 Responses to item 16 “*I can imagine myself speaking English as if I were a native speaker.*”

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
Motivated learners (1)	1.1%	1.1%	2.3%	12.5%	23.9%	59.1%
Less-motivated learners (2)	2.9%	4.4%	5.9%	16.2%	30.9%	39.7%

Group 1 N= 88; Group 2 N = 68
U = 2331.50; p = .01

Noteworthy differences for item 17 are that more than half of the less-motivated learners disagree or only slightly agree with the idea of making progress on *Livemocha*; whereas, more than 70% of the motivated learners moderately or strongly agree. This might be an indication that success and achievement are an important factor for motivation.

Table 5 Responses to item 17 “*I feel I made progress with my English since I have started using livemocha.com.*”

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
Motivated learners (1)	3.4%	4.5%	3.4%	17.1%	35.2%	36.4%
Less-motivated learners (2)	4.5%	10.3%	13.2%	38.2%	23.5%	10.3%

Group 1 N= 88; Group 2 N = 68
U = 1723.00; p = .00

The same is true for item 18, where the majority of motivated learners agrees that *Livemocha.com* is more helpful than a regular English classroom or a langue learning software. More than half of the less-motivated learners on the other hand disagree with this statement. Interestingly, 26.2% of motivated learners also disagree.

Table 6 Responses to item 18 “*I think I can learn more on livemocha.com than in a regular English classroom or language software.*”

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
Motivated learners (1)	2.3%	3.4%	20.5%	21.6%	26.1%	26.1%
Less-motivated learners (2)	7.4%	13.2%	30.9%	29.4%	11.7%	7.4%

Group 1 N= 88; Group 2 N = 68
U = 1791.00; p = .00

Further Mann-Whitney tests have been conducted in part B, where five items showed significant differences between motivated and less-motivated learner groups; namely items 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24. Table 7 presents that the vast majority of motivated learners regards learning with peers as helpful for their own learning progress; while 18% less of the less-motivated learners fully agree with this statement.

Table 7 Responses to item 20 “*Learning English with the help of other users is...*”

	1 not helpful	2	3	4	5	6	7 helpful
Motivated learners (1)	0%	0%	0%	2.3%	2.3%	21.5%	73.9%
Less-motivated learners (2)	0%	0%	0%	4.4%	13.2%	26.5%	55.9%

Group 1 N= 88; Group 2 N = 68
U = 2382.00; p = .009

Not only receiving help from other users, but also giving feedback to peer learners is rated differently by those two groups. 59.1% of the motivated learners found it very helpful, whereas only 42.6% gave the full seven points to this question.

Table 8 Responses to item 21 “*Giving feedback to other users is....*”

	1 not helpful	2	3	4	5	6	7 helpful
Motivated learners (1)	0%	1.1%	0%	3.4%	8.0%	28.4%	59.1%
Less-motivated learners (2)	0%	0%	4.4%	8.8%	16.2%	28.0%	42.6%

Group 1 N= 88; Group 2 N = 68
U = 2345.00; p = .011

The frequency table of item 22 shows that the major part of group 1 rated “*My interest in getting to know the English speaking culture*” the highest and almost a third of this group chose the second highest rating. In contrast, most of the less-motivated learners, who also have a relatively high score for this statement, rated this statement between 4 and 6.

Table 9 Responses to item 22 “*My interest in getting to know the English speaking culture is...*”

	1 low	2	3	4	5	6	7 high
Motivated learners (1)	1.1%	0%	2.3%	1.1%	12.5%	31.8%	51.2%
Less-motivated learners (2)	0%	2.9%	1.5%	13.2%	20.6%	29.4%	32.4%

Group 1 N= 88; Group 2 N = 68
U = 2189.50; p = .002

Regarding item 23 “*Getting to know people online is... important-not important*” the differences show that motivated learners consider meeting new people on the internet far more important than the less-motivated learners. Almost 40% of group 1 chose the maximum point score and an almost additional 30 % gave 6 points. Scores for group 2 were more equally distributed and also the three lowest scores received ratings of almost 15%.

Table 10 Responses to item 23 “*Getting to know people online is...*”

	1 not im- portant	2	3	4	5	6	7 important
Motivated learners (1)	0%	3.4%	2.3%	1.1%	23.9%	29.5%	39.8%
Less-motivated learners (2)	5.9%	2.9%	5.8%	19.1%	22.1%	22.1%	22.1%

Group 1 N= 88; Group 2 N = 68
U = 1995.50; p = .00

Perceived success on the learning platform *Livemocha* (item 24) also differed significantly between motivated and less-motivated learners. As shown in table 11, almost 90% of the motivated learners rated this statement between 5 and 7, which again is a strong indication for achievement and success as important factors for motivation. This has already been regarded as crucial in item 17 “*I feel I made progress with my English since I have started using Livemocha.com*” (cf. Table 5).

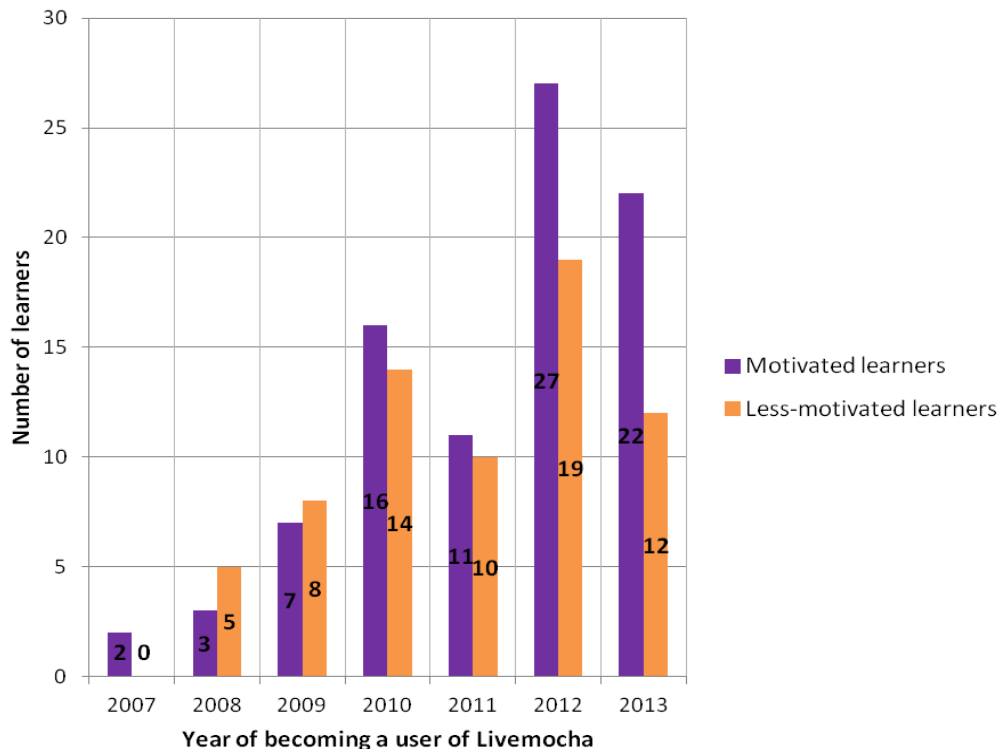
Table 11 Responses to item 24 “*I am successful learning English on livemocha.com*”

	1 not true	2	3	4	5	6	7 true
Motivated learners (1)	0%	1.1%	1.1%	8.0%	18.1%	29.5%	42.1%
Less-motivated learners (2)	8.8%	5.9%	8.8%	20.6%	25%	17.7%	13.2%

Group 1 N= 88; Group 2 N = 68

U = 2382.00; p = .00

An additional analysis has been done on part C, to show how diversity on various levels influences both groups of motivated and less-motivated learners. First, a comparison of the groups has been conducted according to their year of registration on *Livemocha*.

Figure 13 Differences across motivated and less-motivated learners according to their year of registration

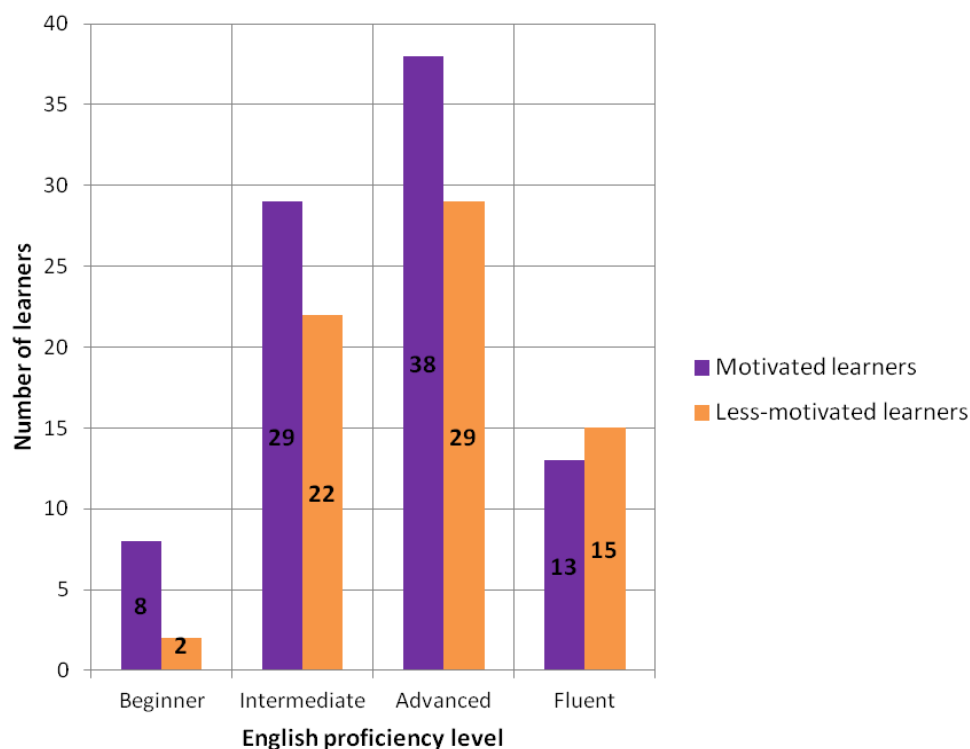
What concerns duration of registration in general, the average time of being registered on the platform of survey respondents is two years and two months, ranging from a minimum participation of one month to a maximum of six years. The median, however, is one year and three months, which represents the sample better.

As Figure 13 presents, people who became member of the *Livemocha* community rather late tend to be more motivated, which could be explained by the fact

that the longer the website is used, the more likely it might become boring. The initial phase of using *Livemocha* is probably more motivating, since all functions need to be discovered and are more exciting at the beginning. There are more less-motivated than motivated users, who are member of the platform for more than four years. Most motivated users registered in the last year.

The next chart presents the two groups of motivated and less-motivated learners according to their English level. It has to be noted here that the English level represents a self-judgment of respondents, since there was no way of testing them.

Figure 14 Differences across motivated and less-motivated learners according to their English level



The chart shows that the fluent speakers are the only group where less-motivated learners outweigh the motivated ones. In all other groups, the number of motivated learners is higher. Possible reasons for this phenomenon can be found in the analysis of part C of the questionnaire (cf. chapter 6.3) as given in Figure 10 “*Why is your motivation for learning English on Livemocha.com not high?*” Many people stated that they use *Livemocha.com* for learning other languages rather than English, because they are already fluent speakers.

I learn it [English] as a one of many other languages. I focus myself on Slavonic languages, so English is not so important to me. I regard

it more as an additional language, than a main one (No. 107, female Polish native speaker).

I'm learning French. My English got to an advanced level long before *Livemocha*. I'm only looking on the side for partners to enhance my English pronunciation [...] (No. 153, male Italian native speaker).

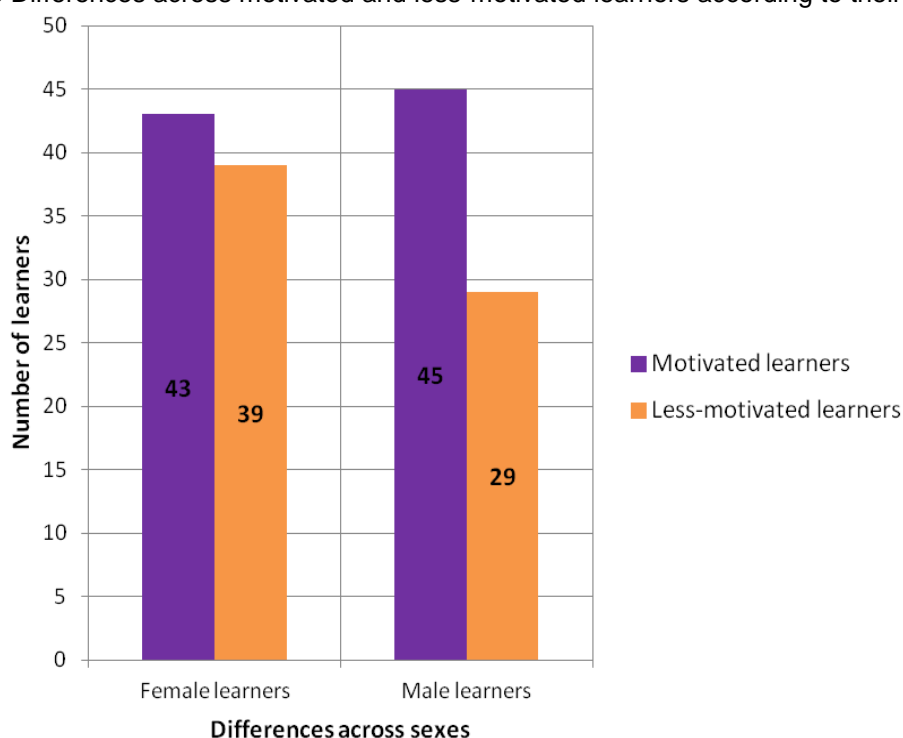
Although there is a large number of advanced English learners who fall into the motivated group, comparing it to other responses many users consider *Livemocha* as a helpful tool for beginning learners, rather than for more advanced language levels. The opinions on this, however, differ:

The lessons of *Livemocha.com* are not rich enough (No. 118, male Arabic native speaker).

There is a good variety of exercises. You can do writing, chat and there are questions that are asking you, if you have understood the text. There are reviews from other members about your finished exercise and this is very helpful to take an eye on your weak point [...] (No. 105, male German native speaker).

A comparison between male and female website users has also been done, grouped by motivated and less-motivated learners.

Figure 15 Differences across motivated and less-motivated learners according to their sex



Differences between men and women in the motivated group are not considerable. There are, however, more less-motivated female learners than male learners. A comparison of the means with the Mann-Whitney U-test shows that there is no statistically significant difference.

Furthermore, analyses of all other factors of motivation did not bring any significant results between man and women. It can therefore be said that the sex does not play a crucial role in this motivational research.

Figure 16 Frequency of usage of the website *Livemocha* across motivated and less-motivated learners in numbers

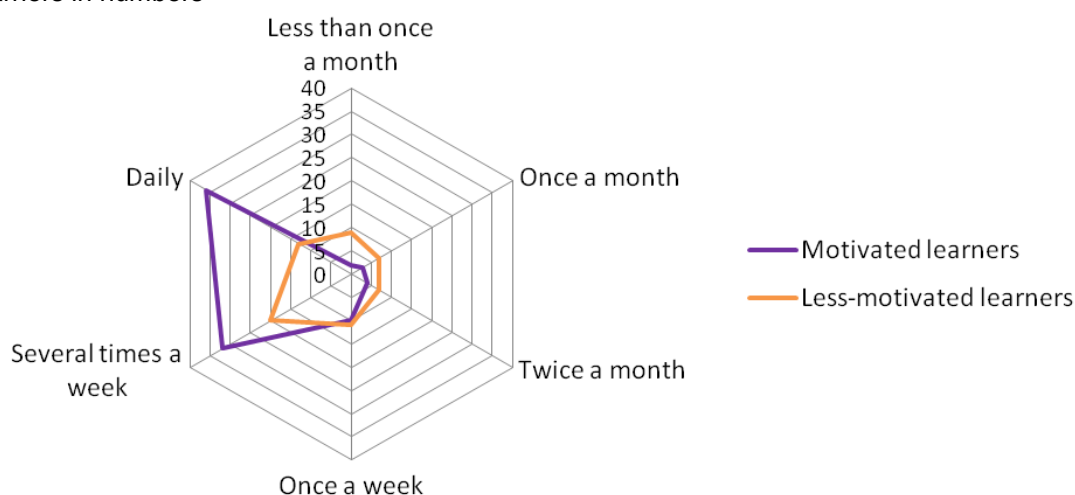


Figure 16 presents how often motivated and less-motivated users actually use or work on the peer learning platform, indicating the persistence of usage. There is an obvious difference between the two groups; especially when looking at the answering option “daily”. 36 people of the motivated users, which is more than 40%, use *Livemocha* on a daily basis. Further 36% use it several times a week, which indicates a plausible relation of persistence and motivation.

Less-motivated learners use the platform less frequently than the other group. There are still 13 people who claim to use the website on a daily basis, and 20 who use it several times a week, but more than half of the less-motivated users use it once a week or less.

To give a short summary of this chapter, it becomes obvious that there are clear differences between the group of motivated learners and the group of less motivated learners. Especially in the social context motivated users tend to perceive

it as more important to learn with others and give and receive feedback from peer learners. They also like to get to know people and cultures from all over the world, or at least more than less-motivated learners. Another crucial factor is success. The less-motivated group does not consider their success as high as the motivated group. They also think they make little progress and do not achieve what they could in a language classroom. Furthermore, it has been found that the frequency of usage for motivated learners is much higher than the one of less-motivated ones. Also, learners' motivation decreases in general the longer they use the platform.

7 Discussion

The study has yielded some interesting results that will be interpreted and discussed in this section in order to find out in how far the research questions can and have been answered. Again, the purpose of the study is to find out about the motivation of English learners on the peer learning platform *Livemocha* and subsequently to analyze its value for the use of the platform in language classrooms.

7.1 Effort and Persistence of Language Learning

To answer the first research question: "How do peer learning websites affect the effort and persistence of language learning?" it has to be stated again how motivation is defined. A general description of the concept is "why people decide to do something, how hard they are going to pursue it and how long they are willing to sustain the activity" (Dörnyei 2001: 7). Therefore, how often and how long users of *Livemocha* actually use the platform is the first crucial question that is relevant for motivation.

It is assumed that the more often and the longer people spend their time working and communicating on the platform, the higher is their motivation. Since 103

out of 156 respondents claimed to be using the learning website every day or at least several times a week, this result is very important in terms of persistence. Especially, when we consider that most of the users do this voluntarily and have to schedule their studying time on their own and set their individual learning goals (Murphy 2011: 108). Nonetheless, there are a few things to take into account here. First of all, out of this 103 active users, only five used the webpage for more than five years, eight of those users were members for four years. Most people who claim to be active users, 58 to be exact, registered on the platform only a year ago. (cf. Figure 13). Secondly, we have to be careful when making general statements about the overall evidence of this sample, because people who participated in the study were asked via the message or chat function of *Livemocha* and therefore the likelihood is higher to address more active users than inactive users since the latter are harder to reach.

In terms of duration, it was also surprising that one third of the respondents were long term users. To be precise, 55 respondents have been *Livemocha*-members for 4-7 years and show that the use of the website is not only interesting for a short period of time, but can be used for a longer time. Yet, activities that are sustained for a longer period of time do not yield the same, constant motivation during this period (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 6), but it may fluctuate in various ways. Hence, it would have been interesting to conduct a diachronic study to analyze this fluctuation in motivation and find more detailed results.

Furthermore, the following results from the questionnaire have been taken into account in order to find out about effort and persistence of language learning on *Livemocha*. First, motivational intensity very much depends on the effort of learning. Therefore, item 1, "*I work hard to learn English*", represents the estimated effort of respondents. The mean outcome of this question was 4.40 of a maximum of 6 points ("strongly agree"). Hence, the results are positive, but not extremely high. Also a comparison between motivated and less-motivated learners did not display a statistical significance. The second item for the category "Motivational Intensity", number 7, was "*I don't pay much attention to the feedback I receive from peer learners.*" It also shows the effort people are investing in the learning process. Since this is a negatively keyed item, 6 points

therefore refer to “strongly disagree”. A mean of 4.37 shows that although the motivational intensity here is positive, it is not outstanding.

So the general effort of *Livemocha*-users is not extremely high, nevertheless users still have a rather positive motivational intensity for effort. This is true for the whole sample, since there were no statistically significant differences found between the group of motivated and less-motivated learners or according to groups of different language levels. Effort can hence only be regarded as a sub-factor of motivation. Self-perceived motivation in general was rated rather high in item 25 with a mean of 5.48 and a mode of 6 (maximum 7).

Effort, though, is not the only factor for motivation, along with it there are also conditions of striving, want, desire, or hope (Rheinberg & Vollmeyer 2012: 14 ff.) that have been covered under the category of “Desire to learn English.” Items of this category have been rated a little higher than the items of motivational intensity. Item 4, “*I have a strong desire to know all aspects of English.*” received a mean score of 5.03. Comparing different language levels here, it was found out that mainly fluent learners agree most with this statement. The negatively keyed item 8. “*I haven’t got any great wish to learn more than the basics of English*” on the other hand received a slightly higher mean with 5.31.

The overall desire to learn a language is often greater than the actual work that is put into a project, which is also the case in this study. The desire to learn English is a little higher than the pure effort users of *Livemocha* are taking. This indicates that even though participants want to learn and study on the platform or improve their English, the real effort they are taking is not the same, but a little lower. Reasons for this development can be explained by looking at Figure 10, “*Why is your motivation for learning English on Livemocha.com not high?*”. Participants probably do not invest enough time in studying on the website because of various factors: they do not have enough time, they do not like certain features on the website, or they did not find any friends there or did not receive the feedback they were hoping for.

These findings that effort is not extremely high or often even lower than expected was also found in studies by Bennett et. al (2012: 532) and Tervakari et al. (2012: 40). However, in these studies, students were required to use peer

learning programs and did not do it voluntarily as it was the case in this project. This is an indication that there it has a positive influence on motivation when learning takes place voluntarily.

7.2 Motives

The second research question “What motivates L2 learners to use peer learning websites?” has been chosen on the basis of motives, or, in other words of reasons for a certain behavior that are supposed to influence motivation as well. Motives describe “why people decide to do something” (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 4) and they play an important role in goal-theories (cf. chapter 4.2.2) that state that individuals pursue different goals in order to be satisfied with their actions (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 20). They also show up in the concept of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in self-determination theory (cf. chapter 4.2.3) that distinguishes between motives that come from the inside or the outside of a person. Since motives can differ significantly in their content this section has been further divided to distinguish between social, cultural, and professional motives.

7.2.1 Social Motives

Social factors are the most important reasons for studying on peer learning platforms, because these websites are supposed to foster relationships between people and maintain interaction just like social networking sites. Furthermore, Ushioda (2011: 19) mentions the meaning of English as a globalized language that becomes more and more important in many curricula along with Gardner’s notion of integrative orientation. It includes the desire to learn a language in order to be part of a social community, to get to know their culture (Gardner & Lambert 1972: 12), or “the openness to identify [...] with another language community (Masgoret & Gardner 2003: 126). Therefore, the questionnaire addressed several issues on social motives that can be taken into account.

Item 2, “*Studying English is important because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people.*”, as well as item 5, “*Studying English is important because I will be able to interact more easily with speakers of English.*”, were both rated rather high. Item 2 received a mean score of 5.48 and item 5 a mean of 5.56 out of a maximum of 6 points. This shows that English is learned in order to be able to engage with a broader social environment, which is the main reason to learn a second language (Lightbown & Spada 2006: 29). The results also show that the interaction with native speakers is slightly more important to respondents than the interaction with people who speak English as a second language. This was also supported by the answers of the qualitative part. Many respondents answered that they joined the *Livemocha* community because they want to be in contact and learn from native speakers. Although learning from ESL speakers was valued highly by some respondents, opinions on that point differed. Some people do not care if they are corrected by natives or other advanced ESL learners:

My motivation is high, because I can do exercises on livemocha.com and my exercises are reviewed by native speakers and users that speak English well and can help me to improve. (No. 89, male Portuguese native speaker)

Others prefer native speakers because they do not agree with correction of ESL learners:

I love being corrected by native speakers [...], some people speak English as a second language and I don't agree with some corrections. I enjoy correcting exercises in Spanish and helping people with their exercises. I've been an English teacher for 22 years now and to become a foreign language teacher you are supposed to manage and be GOOD at your native language, at least in my country Argentina. (No. 155, female Spanish native speaker).

Moreover, item 20, “*Learning English with the help of other users is... (not helpful – helpful)*”, yielded a result of 6.53 (total of 7 points), which is also significantly high. Apparently, users of the platform regard it as essential to share and learn with peers, rather than studying alone. This is also an indication that cooperative learning is indeed a powerful motivational factor, as has been shown in previous studies (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 27 ff.). Also giving feedback to other users as was asked in item 21 was considered as helpful (mean of 6.21). This means that people regard the opportunity to help others and in-

vest their time to teach their own language as valuable for their own learning process of the L2. There was also a statistical significance between motivated and less-motivated learners for item 20 and 21. Motivated learners saw cooperation in learning as more helpful.

Learning in general can be more enjoyable if it is done with peers as this respondent explains why he likes to learn English on *Livemocha*:

Because I have interaction with humans, not just books (No. 129, male Farsi native speaker).

In comparison to the previously stated motives of using others to learn a language, item 23 asked participants about their opinion on getting to know other people online. This question concentrated hence on a solely social factor without the intention of learning anything. This item received a lower score than the items related to language learning; namely 5.54 points out of 7. However, it is still rather high and shows that people like to get in contact with others or expand their social environment. What is interesting is the fact that motivated learners are more interested and open to befriend other people on the platform.

Lin and Lu (2011: 1159) also discovered similar findings in their study. Motivation on social networks increases with the personal enjoyment users experience. Enjoyment then correlates with the number of peers. The more people the users know and interact with, the more likely they will be motivated to continue using the social media service. Therefore, in order to be motivated on *Livemocha* friends and peer learners are important, as it has been found in this study.

7.2.2 Cultural Motives

A further motive that was considered to influence motivation was culture. Along with learning a foreign language, getting acquainted to the culture of a country is another important factor to consider. In connection to Vygotskij's sociocultural theory it is argued that "[l]earning takes place through participation in cultural systems of activity [...]" (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 33). However, while learning a foreign language, many L2 learners do not have the possibility to travel to a

foreign country to get to know the culture there or to get in contact with people who are living there. Peer learning platforms offer a wide variety of possibilities to get in touch with other cultures, either through chatting or messaging with peer learners or by using the “Explore culture” function of the website.

Item 22, “*My interest in getting to know the English speaking culture is... (low – high),*” ranging from 1-7 received a mean score of 6.00. This shows that most learners are interested in other cultures and regard it as vital to be informed about the lifestyle, attitudes and habits of natives. Furthermore, the difference between the group of motivated learners and less-motivated learners was highly significant. However, the results do not show how far respondents regard culture as helpful for their learning process.

7.2.3 Professional Motives

Professional motives refer to reasons of career and job why people learn English. This can be supported by self-determination theory (cf. chapter 4.2.3) and more specifically by the concept of extrinsic motivation. This kind of motivation refers to all motives to achieve a goal or to receive some reward from outside (Dörnyei 2001: 10). On the other hand, instrumental motivation is included as an external influence in the socio-educational. Instrumentality describes the incentive to learn a language for “practical or utilitarian purposes” (Gardner 2006: 249). In this case, the improvement of one’s professional life would be the motive. Gardner suggests that students estimate instrumental items as more valuable and relevant for themselves as integrative items (ibid: 243), meaning that they consider it as more important to study for improving at their job than their openness to integrate in culturally different groups. Thus, instrumental values have to be included as an essential factor for motivation.

Looking at item 13, “*Studying English is important because I will need it for my career.*”, and item 14, “*Studying English is important because it will be useful in getting a good job.*”, it becomes obvious that respondents rated those items on average very high (5.28 / 5.29 of a maximum of 6), which can also be supported by Gardner’s findings (2006: 249). Similar results were found in the study by

Bennett et al. (2013: 530) that concludes that students or learners are more motivated if they consider activities as useful for further purposes as their job.

7.3 Attitudes towards Foreign Languages

Attitudes towards learning foreign languages was another factor included in the questionnaire. For the socio-educational model, the attitudes towards the learning situation are considered as important (Masgoret & Gardner 2003: 127), because those include aspects of classroom atmosphere or the teacher. However, this category has been limited to the general attitude towards language learning, which is a sub-factor of motivation according to Gardner's socio-educational model (2006: 249).

Items 2, "*I would like to learn many foreign languages.*", and 9, "*Studying foreign languages is not enjoyable.*", represent the category "Interest in foreign languages" that can partly be seen as part of integrativeness (cf. Figure 3). However, it also presents the attitude towards learning an L2. Item 2 received a mean of 5.05 (out of 6) and item 9 a mean of 5.45 (negatively keyed: 6 "strongly disagree"), which shows that the overall interest in foreign languages is high, but the wish to learn several languages is a little lower.

"Attitudes towards foreign languages" is the next category. It includes "*I plan to learn as much English as possible.*" (item 6) and "*Learning English is a waste of time.*" (item 10). Respondents agreed strongly with item 6 (5.47) and disagreed even more with item 10 (5.71), which presents the positive attitudes of ESL learning among *Livemocha*-users.

The general attitude has again been asked directly in item 19, "*My attitude towards learning English in general is...(negative – positive)*", ranging from 1-7, which has been answered by participants with an average of 6.43. Questions about attitude did not yield a statistical significance for motivated and less-motivated learners. However, item 19 presented a difference on English levels. Especially fluent and advanced learners have a more positive attitude towards language learning and it is rather low for beginning learners.

7.4 Success and Achievement

“Do users of peer learning websites actually succeed in reaching their goals?” The third research question that was asked was supposed to show that success and motivation are related. A theory that stresses the importance of success is the one of achievement motivation by Atkinson and Raynor (1974: 13), who claim that the need for achievement is a strongly influencing factor for motivation (cf. chapter 4.2.1). Dörnyei and Ushioda, on the other hand, state that the “relationship between motivation and achievement is not straightforward. Motivation – by definition – is the antecedent of action rather than achievement.” (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 200 ff.) However, the views that motivation and achievement are related are strong. Gardner argues that motivation and also ability are “largely responsible for levels of achievement” (2006: 240).

There are of course more variables that influence achievement but in order to find out about how successful motivated learners on *Livemocha* are items 17, 18, and 24 have been included to get some results on this topic. “*I feel I made progress on my English since I have started using livemocha.com*” (item 17) only received a mean score of 4.47 (maximum 6 points) that shows that the overall agreement with this statement is not extremely high. Moreover, there is a remarkable significance between the group of motivated and less-motivated learners. More than 70% of the motivated learners agree with item 17; whereas only 33.8 % of the less-motivated learners agree (cf. Table 5). Item 18, “*I think I can learn more on livemocha.com than in a regular English classroom or language software.*”, received a even lower score of 4.02. Again there is a difference between motivated and less-motivated learners. It is noteworthy that more than half of the less-motivated users (51.5%) disagree with this statement; while only 26.2% of the motivated learners do (cf. Table 6). Therefore, the statement “students with higher levels of motivation will do better than students with lower levels” (Gardner 2006: 241) can be applied to this study. Moreover, it was interesting to see that there was also a significant difference in item 18 between learners of different English levels, in so far as particularly beginners agreed most with the statement that they can learn more on *Livemocha.com* compared to other learning software or in English classrooms.

Furthermore, item 24, *“I am successful learning English on livemocha.com (not true – true)”*, yielded an outcome of 5.36 on a scale from 1-7. Again, motivated learners agreed strongly (42.1%) with this statement; whereas only 13.2% of the less-motivated learners found this statement to be true (cf. Table 11). Overall, motivated learners were in the majority to agree, only 10.2% rated the items with a score of 4 or lower. 44.1% of less-motivated learners on the other hand disagreed with it.

These findings go along with previous research of the socio-educational model:

The results clearly demonstrate that the correlations between achievement and motivation are uniformly higher than those between achievement and integrativeness, attitudes towards the learning situation, integrative orientation, or instrumental orientation [...] (Masgoret & Gardner 2003: 123 ff.).

Also in this study the statistical significances were highest between motivated and less-motivated learners in terms of achievement.

Additionally, the items about the L2 motivational self system (cf. chapter 4.2.5) were included in this section of achievement, because L2-self of Dörnyei is closely related to achievement. In case of the ideal L2-self it is the achievement learners think they can realistically reach and in case of the ought-to L2-self it is the achievement they think they should have.

Items for the ideal L2-self were *“Whenever I think of my future career, I imagine myself using English.”* (item 15, score of 4.93) and *“I can imagine myself speaking English as if I were a native speaker.”* (item 16, score of 5.13). Both items were again not rated extremely high; however, item 16 showed a difference in motivation. Motivated learners found it far more likely to reach a level of a native speaker in English, less-motivated learners not so much.

The ought-to L2 self yielded some interesting results. The mean score of item 11, *“I study English because my friends or my family think it is important.”*, was only 2.10 out of 6 maximum points. This suggests that people do not consider it as important or committing to do what their social environment tells them, but rather see themselves driven by what they think, want or desire. This is also what Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011: 82) say and explains why the ideal-L2 self is rated higher.

Thus, the ideal self involves the individual's own vision for him or herself, while the ought self involves someone else's vision for the individual – the latter may therefore bear little resemblance to one's own desires or wishes or the possibility of ever attaining them.

Item 12, “*Life is harder, if I am not able to speak English.*”, on the other hand did not involve the social environment, but the general environment that presents itself as external force. This item was rated higher, though (4.02). In other words, participants agree more with the fact that it might have a negative impact on their lives if they do not learn English.

8 Implementing Social Learning Platforms in the EFL classroom

How can peer learning websites be used in a language classroom of a school setting in order to increase motivation? The fourth research question tries to investigate how the empirical findings can now be used to find out how peer learning websites can be part of a school setting and increase learning motivation. This question will be investigated by concluding from both, the collected data and the literature.

Initially, it has to be said that using *Livemocha* in a school setting is different than using it in a voluntary context at home. Students will be obliged to use it or they might not be equally fond of it. Therefore, the analysis of the data cannot be taken over directly, but has to be adapted to the context. As Bennett et al. (2012: 533) say, we cannot assume that educational expectations on motivation are the same as for private usage of social media technologies. We, therefore, have to differentiate between educational practices and social media. This means that even though a student might use social networking sites regularly in his or her free-time, it does not mean that this motivation will be the same for using them in an educational setting or on peer learning platforms.

A school setting differs in several ways. Usually, learners go there since they have to do so due to laws or the advice of their parents. Language learning is

simply part of the curriculum and furthermore the choice of which L2 they can learn is not there either or highly limited. Intrinsic motivation to learn an L2 might be completely absent in some cases. However, schools as a whole may also be very important for enhancing student motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 29) or to draw students' attention to the fact that language learning can be fun as well. What also contributes to this fact is that "[t]eachers naturally act as key social figures who affect the motivational quality of the learning process in positive and negative ways" (ibid: 28). This means that it is the task of a teacher to encourage and motivate students. Furthermore, "[p]eer groups may also exert a powerful influence on individual motivation, especially among young adolescent learners since adolescence is a period when peer relations take on increasing significance over parental influence" (ibid: 29). Thus, motivation can be influenced by the school as such, the teacher, and peers within the classroom. It therefore depends on how a peer learning website is used in a language classroom. Tasks and functions have to be adjusted to the learners' needs. One possibility to get learner's attention is to confront them with "real things" to make communication meaningful to them (Widdowson 2003: 115). This is an argument why peer learning platforms can be appealing to students, because they offer real communication with native speakers or ESL learners.

Learners do have different preferences when it comes to language learning. It has to be considered that not all learners agree with the same methods and they do not all learn at the same pace. Additionally, learners have strong beliefs how their instruction and guidance should be delivered (Lightbown & Spada 2006: 14). Therefore, it seems crucial that teachers choose from different approaches, and they always have to recall that each individual has different needs and beliefs. Hence, there should be room for variety (Hedge 2000: 179). When using the services of a peer learning platform for an English classroom, it is important not to design lessons monotonously. Even though peer learning platforms offer a variety of tasks and functions and are interactive, an overuse might decrease motivation. This can also be observed when looking at the persistent usage of *Livemocha* members (cf. Figure 16). Long-term users tend to be less motivated than short-term users. Therefore, if the website is used too often, it might get boring at some point.

Another factor that needs to be taken into account is age. All respondents in this study were older than 16, the vast majority older than 20 and ranging up to 73. Learners of a school context would be – depending on the grade level – younger or as old as the lower age group of this sample. This might bring some disparities to the learning context. Younger learners are usually less autonomous and need more guidance. Therefore, when using peer learning platforms, the teacher still needs to provide a guiding framework to set up rules and support learners during the online learning process. Nevertheless, when blending face-to-face and computer-assisted language learning, learners generally have more autonomy and are responsible for scheduling their study time and for achieving goals they set for themselves.

This, then, can also be a means of maintaining motivation through autonomy (Murphy 2011: 107), because autonomy in learning, should be one of the main aims of teaching. Peer learning websites allow autonomous and flexible learning to a large extent. They can also be used at home and at all times. Students, however, need to be guided to become independent learners. Furthermore, “involving students in making relevant choices and decisions about their learning may facilitate [the] process of alignment towards culturally valued adaptive values and identities” (Ushioda 2011: 21). For this purpose, peer learning websites offer opportunities to promote autonomous learning.

The question for which language level the employment of peer learning websites in language classrooms is appropriate is not that easy to answer. According to the results, many users regard the exercises the platform provides as basic and repetitive and not appropriate for advanced learners. However, not everybody agrees with that; therefore, the quality of the English lesson can be improved by previously selecting appropriate tasks for the language level of learners. It is the teacher’s task to decide which exercise are appropriate and fitting the purpose of a lesson. However, one should not forget that this might be a time-consuming task (Beatty 2010: 165). Also, the chat and message functions that are most popular among *Livemocha*-users can be implemented in the ESL classroom. Depending on how high the language level is, students can look for appropriate language learning partners. Admittedly, this might be a rather challenging task for both teachers and students. As it was observed in the

findings, some respondents made some disappointing experiences with other language learners or were not able to find helpful peers to communicate with. Furthermore, there is always the danger to get in contact with inappropriate content when talking to strangers. A teacher can of course not supervise all conversations. For this reason, safety instructions are necessary. It has to be explained how to react when talking to people who are not interested in language learning (to put it mildly) or why not to give away private data to strangers for example. Since peer learning platforms usually have their members limited to people who are interested in language learning, this should not be too much of a problem. However, it is still possible and teachers have to be prepared.

It has been found out that it is social interaction with real people that makes the website interesting and also motivating to continue the learning process. The analysis of the findings shows that motivation is strongly linked to the interest in getting to know other people and their culture. Also, giving and receiving feedback from other users is seen as motivating. This can be supported by Ushioda, who claims that “it is through social participation in opportunities, negotiations and activities that people’s motivations and identities develop and emerge as dynamically co-constructed process” (2011: 21 ff.). Receiving feedback from other learners might help to get aware of challenges one faces, improve one’s English and at the same time foster social contacts. Also the results show that feedback on peer learning websites are an important factor for motivation.

Furthermore, social interaction with native speakers or other ESL learners is a way to get around the problem of authenticity in the language classroom. Widdowson argues that it is not easy to introduce real, authentic language in the classroom, because “[y]ou cannot simply replicate the sociocultural conditions which made the language actual for its users in the first place” (2003: 112). Peer learning websites provide solutions for creating original learning conditions, when communicating with other members. It also solves the problem of how to use genuine texts and at the same time create authentic discourse (ibid: 93). Chatting or talking to other members is a way of “reconstruct[ing] the original contexts and make them accessible, while at the same time making them appropriate to the learning process” (ibid: 113). This can be achieved by

introducing web quests, for example, a kind of research exercise that involves detailed instruction for looking for information on a website (Heim & Ritter 2012: 74 ff.). In this case communication could work well when giving specific tasks to find out about other cultures by talking to people online by giving an interview guideline. Moreover, this is a further way of encouraging autonomous learning that increases motivation:

When students are enabled to voice opinions, preferences and values, align themselves with those of others, engage in discussion, struggle, resist, negotiate, compromise or adapt, their motivational dispositions and identities evolve and are given expression (Ushioda 2011: 21).

Concerning achievement, it has already been stated before that “achievement can influence motivation” (Gardner 2006: 244) and relevant indications for this fact were also found in this study. Motivated learners usually succeed more, or it might also be the case that successful learners are more motivated. However, it has also been said previously that motivation and achievement function in a cyclical relationship (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011: 5). For the ESL classroom in schools though it is important to remember to keep students motivated by ensuring their success. This is possible when teachers guide the learning process and give students controllable and appropriate tasks.

Ushioda claims that “[s]tudents’ engagement in school, their choices, struggles and negotiations are clearly affected by and in turn influence who they think they are, who they think they want to be and who they actually become” (2011: 21). This also became obvious from the inquiry into the L2 self. Learners, who were able to imagine their language ability to reach a native speaker level, were far more motivated. It is, therefore, advisable to encourage students in a school and open up their possibilities of what they can reach. So again, the teacher also has an important role as motivator.

What is left to add to this chapter is, that the findings are restricted to English learning; nonetheless, they can also be applied for learning other languages. Another important point, the concept of anxiety has been left out, even though it is part of the socio-educational model (Gardner 2006: 245). It might be relevant for this topic as well, and therefore be subject to a more thorough research, to find out how peer learning websites can help introvert learners, for example.

To summarize the findings, implementing peer learning platforms does not naturally increase motivation. The usage needs to be defined clearly in order to achieve a positive effect. It, therefore, depends on how teachers use them. The platforms can be a welcome change in a classroom and motivate students in terms of effort, persistence, goals, and achievement. Also the fact that 95.5% of *Livemocha's* users would recommend the platforms, supports the choice to introduce it in a classroom.

9 Conclusion

The major points of interest in this thesis have been to explore motivational aspects relevant to users of language learning websites and how this in turn might be taken as advantage for the implementation of peer learning platforms in language classes in schools. These issues were pursued in an empirical analysis on motivation of peer learning platform users. The research on these factors was administered with mainly quantitative, but also qualitative methods, asking users about their learning habits and motives to study English on the peer learning platform *Livemocha*.

In order to be able to conduct the research, it was necessary to first get deeper insights into the theory of computer-assisted language learning (CALL); how modern computer technologies can be introduced meaningfully to a school and learning context. Furthermore, the advantages and potentials of social media technologies have been laid out, on the one hand, to show the various possibilities that exist and, on the other hand, to prove their powerful motivational influence. Peer learning platforms as an instance of social media have been introduced and *Livemocha* has been chosen as website for a case study. Theoretical concepts of motivation have been brought in to build a basis for the empirical study. It has been found, though, that the theory of L2 motivation is not only an interdisciplinary field, since it includes three scholarly domains; namely, language education, (applied) linguistics, and psychology (Dörnyei & Ushioda

2011: 253), but motivation as such is also a concept that is multidimensional and not easy to measure or define.

For this reasons, motivation was measured drawing from several theories. A questionnaire was set up in reference to Gardner's socio-educational model (2006), Dörnyei's L2 motivations self-system (2005), and other theories mentioned in chapter 4.2. Most items were taken from the AMTB, in order to ensure that empirical data could be assessed reliably (Gardner 2006: 237). Those items were then compiled to cover different aspects of motivation creating a new framework of measurement, specifically aligned to investigate motivational factors of peer learning platform users. While it can be argued that the whole range of motivation cannot be assessed entirely (Gardner 2006: 243), the study covers the most important factors of motivation.

A further step that concerns methodology included the selection of the sample of the study. The questionnaire was sent out to English learners of *Livemocha* via the message or chat function and brought 156 responses. Due to reasons of simplicity, convenience, and usability of the data, most items consisted of closed-ended questions and were analyzed with quantitative statistical methods. Yet, a couple of questions were open-ended to bring in more variety and to avoid overlooking some important facts. This part was examined with qualitative methods that were supposed to ensure staying away from simply averaging out the whole results.

The outcomes were then used to discuss how they reflect on the research questions about effort and persistence, the motives, and the achievement on peer learning websites. It has been discovered that the effort that people are making depend on various factors: their motives, their attitudes towards the language, and how they like the website personally. Moreover, the persistence of language learning is not constant. Most of the users that are members for a longer period of time become more less-motivated. It can therefore be said that the use of peer learning platforms in schools can only be interesting if they are not overused and activities on the platform have to be varied to keep learners engaged.

The motives of using peer learning platforms are decisive for motivation as well. Most importantly, the results reflect that the majority of the respondents uses the website and maintains motivation due to social contacts on the website. Building up friendships or co-operative learning tandems turned out to be an effective way of sustaining engagement. In ESL classrooms, this function can be turned into an advantage for students by offering them contact with native speakers and other ESL learners and thereby providing them with authentic discourse and cultural insights to other users' countries. Naturally, there are limitations to building up contact to strangers. Also, tasks need to be defined clearly and have to be useful for learners in order to be effective.

On the long run, tasks that are employed in the learning classroom should encourage students to continue the learning process independently. Overall, peer learning websites can do that to improve autonomous learning. Participating, negotiating, struggling, or sharing experiences and evaluating these in a classroom may help to develop social and adaptive values that are important for forming an identity towards the target language (Ushioda 2011: 22).

To answer the question whether peer learning websites are actually effective and if users succeed in reaching their goals, it turns out that success and motivation are closely related. Users who claim to be successful are also highly motivated and lower motivation results in lower achievement. Therefore, motivation of students in ESL classroom can be enhanced by guaranteeing them to be successful. Hence, exercises should be adapted to the language level of learners and tasks should be set in a manageable, but challenging way.

Finally, the last research question, if peer learning websites can be implemented in the language classroom, can be answered with a yes, even though there are some restraints to it. The issue whether and how it influences motivation is rather complex and might not be the same in each language classroom. In order to increase motivation it is advisable to vary the tasks and exercises and fit them to learners' needs.

While conducting the research and analyzing the findings further research questions developed that would have been interesting to investigate in future studies. The correlation between achievement and motivation apparently plays a

major role, not only in this study, but also according to previous research (Gardner 2006: 244). In order to find out more about it, achievement tests and a longitudinal study would be necessary. Similarly, a follow-up study for respondents of this survey could show major developments in motivation. Furthermore, an empirical study on the actual trial of peer learning platforms in schools would be interesting and could prove whether the assumptions of chapter 8 are actually true.

In conclusion, this research project brings insights to peer learning platforms, how they can be used and what factors increase motivation. It is intended to serve as a guideline for teachers and opens up new possibilities for foreign language teaching.

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World of Warcraft	us.battle.net/wow / eu.battle.net/wow/
Xing	www.xing.com
YouTube.....	www.youtube.com

Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire

The following depiction of the questionnaire is based on the online questionnaire handed to the participants. Each part (e.g. Part A 1/6) was portrayed on a separate page with a button to continue to the next question.

Erstellt von **Silvia Nittnaus** | Web: http://umfrage.oeh-wu.at/fragebogen/motivation_peerlearning



Survey on the Motivation of English Language Learners on the Peer Learning Platform Livemocha.com

General Information

The aim of this study is to find out how peer learning websites are influencing language learning motivation. The survey is conducted by Silvia Nittnaus, student of the University of Vienna as part of my diploma thesis. If you feel like you want to add comments, have questions or get information about the results, please contact me via email: a0701195@unet.univie.ac.at.

All answers and comments will be treated absolutely confidentially. No information about the identity of the respondent will be disclosed.

If you study English on the Learning Platform, I'd really appreciate your support and willingness to take part in this survey by filling in the questionnaire. **It will take you about 8 minutes.** If you decide to do so, please go on and read the instructions.

Part A 1/6

Instruction

Following are a number of statements with which you might agree or disagree. Please click one alternative answer option for each statement according to the amount of your agreement or disagreement with that item. The following sample item will show you the basic procedure.

Example:

English is my favorite language.

Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderately Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Slightly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Slightly Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderately Agree <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/>
---	---	---	--	---	--

Click the box you agree with the most. You can only choose one box. Note: Please answer honestly. There is no right or wrong answer.

*) mandatory question

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
1. I work hard to learn English. *)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I would like to learn many foreign languages. *)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Studying English is important because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people. *)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part A 2/6

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
4. I have a strong desire to know all aspects of English. *)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Studying English is important because I will be able to interact more easily with English native speakers. *)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I plan to learn as much English as possible. *)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part A 3/6

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
7. I don't pay much attention to the feedback I receive from peer learners. *)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I haven't got any great wish to learn more than the basics of English. *)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Studying foreign languages is not enjoyable. *)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part A 4/6

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
10. Learning English is a waste of time. *)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. I study English because my friends or my family think it is important. *)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Life is harder, if I am not able to speak English. *)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part A 5/6

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
13. Studying English is important because I will need it for my career. *)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Studying English is important because it will be useful in getting a good job. *)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Whenever I think of my future career, I imagine myself using English. *)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part A 6/6

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
16. I can imagine myself speaking English as if I were a native speaker. *)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. I feel I made progress with my English since I have started using livemocha.com. *)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. I think I can learn more on livemocha.com than in a regular English classroom or language software. *)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part B 1/7

Instruction

Please mark the scale, which describes your opinion as accurately as possible. Note: Please answer honestly. There is no right or wrong answer.

Example:

Learning English is

difficult ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐ ☐ easy
 *) mandatory question

19. My attitude towards learning English in general is... *)								
negative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	positive

Part B 2/7

20. Learning English with the help of other users is... *)								
not helpful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	helpful

Part B 3/7

21. Giving feedback to other users is.... *)								
not helpful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	helpful

Part B 4/7

22. My interest in getting to know the English speaking culture is... *)								
low	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	high

Part B 5/7

23. Getting to know people online is... *)								
important	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	not important

Part B 6/7

24. I am successful learning English on livemocha.com *)								
not true	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	true

Part B 7/7

25. My motivation to learn English on livemocha.com is... *)								
low	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	high

Part C 1/4

Instruction

In this section you will find some open questions. Please, answer them as accurately as possible.

26. Why is your motivation for learning English on livemocha.com (not) high?

A:

Part C 2/4

Please give reasons why you study English on *livemocha.com*. Multiple answers are possible and you can add further reasons in the field below.

27. Give reasons why you learn English on livemocha.com.

- ☐ I don't like language classes.
- ☐ I don't have the opportunity to attend a language class.
- ☐ Language software is expensive.
- ☐ I can get in contact with people from all over the world.
- ☐ Livemocha.com is interactive.
- ☐ I can study at home.

Other reasons?

A:

Part C 3/4

Please indicate which functions of *livemocha.com* you find most helpful. Multiple answers are possible and you can add further functions in the field below.

28. What parts of livemocha.com do you find most helpful?

- ☐ chat function
- ☐ writing tasks
- ☐ reading tasks
- ☐ speaking tasks
- ☐ listening tasks
- ☐ grammar tasks
- ☐ pronunciation tasks
- ☐ vocabulary courses
- ☐ flashcards
- ☐ peer feedback
- ☐ explore culture

Any other functions on livemocha.com you find helpful?

A:

Part C 4/4

29. Would you recommend livemocha.com for learning languages?

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no

Why would you recommend livemocha.com?

A:

Why would you not recommend livemocha.com?

A:

Part D 1/4

Instruction

Personal Information – Please answer the questions about yourself.

*) mandatory question

How often do you use livemocha.com? (Tick the box that describes your user habits most accurately.) *)

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Several times a week
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ Twice a month
- ☐ Once a month
- ☐ Less than once a month

Part D 2/4

When did you start using livemocha.com? (If you are not sure, your profile page will tell you.)

*) mandatory question

Month

- ☐ January
- ☐ February
- ☐ March
- ☐ April
- ☐ May
- ☐ June
- ☐ July
- ☐ August
- ☐ September
- ☐ October
- ☐ November
- ☐ December

Year: *)

- ☐ 2007
- ☐ 2008
- ☐ 2009
- ☐ 2010
- ☐ 2011
- ☐ 2012
- ☐ 2013

Part D 3/4

Please give information about your languages.

*) mandatory question

Your native language(s):

A:

Your English level: *)

- ☐ Beginner
- ☐ Intermediate
- ☐ Advanced
- ☐ Fluent

Other foreign languages you are learning:

A:

Part D 4/4

Please indicate your age and whether you are male or female.

*) mandatory question

Age: *)

A:

Sex: *)

- ☐ female
- ☐ male

Again, if you feel like you want to add comments, have questions or get information about the results, please contact me via email: a0701195@unet.univie.ac.at.

Thank you very much for spending your time and participating in this study!

Appendix B: Abstract (English)

The emergence of social media technologies has brought about some interesting new features such as social networking sites, blogs, or wikis that have experienced great popularity. Among those technologies are peer learning platforms (i.e. websites that offer language exercises, a learning community, and several features for communication); newly developed online tools for foreign language learning. The question was how they influence motivation and in turn how they can be used in a school setting.

There has been little previous research on this specific topic. Thus, motivational theories have been used to find out about the motivation of language learners on the selected platform *Livemocha*. The data was obtained by conducting a survey with an online questionnaire inquiring 156 members of the online community. The results were then analyzed mainly quantitatively with some additional qualitative insights.

The main findings exposed that most learners of the platform are motivated by the social contact and the cultural diversity of people who are interested in languages and whom they can work with. Additionally, the interactivity of the website and the various possibilities it offers to learn several languages played another major role for motivation. A further crucial finding was that motivation was especially related to attitude and achievement. The more positive the attitude of a learner towards the target language is, the more motivated he or she will be. Motivation was especially high, when learners experienced success.

Therefore, the implementation of peer learning platforms in school classrooms could also be approved of; however with some restrictions. Peer learning websites are only motivating, if they are used for the appropriate language level, if tasks on it are used variedly and if the learning process is guided by a teacher.

Appendix C: Zusammenfassung (German)

Das Aufkommen sozialer Medien brachte neue, interessante Technologien wie zum Beispiel soziale Netzwerke, Blogs oder Wikis hervor, die erhebliche Popularität erlangten. Unter diesen sozialen Medien befinden sich Peer Learning Plattformen, d.h. Webseiten die Sprachübungen, eine Lerngemeinschaft und Kommunikationsmedien bieten, die sich als moderne Internettools zum Fremdsprachenlernen eignen. Die Frage, die gestellt wurde, war, inwiefern diese Seiten Motivation beeinflussen und wie sie im Sprachunterricht einer Schulklasse verwendet werden können.

Es gab wenig vorhergehende Untersuchungen zu diesem Thema, deshalb wurden Motivationstheorien herangezogen, um herauszufinden, wie sich die Motivation von Lernenden am ausgewählten Beispiel der Lernplattform *Livemocha* zusammensetzt. Die Daten wurden durch eine Onlineumfrage mittels eines Fragebogens gesammelt, der 156 Mitglieder der Lernplattform einschloss. Die Ergebnisse wurden anschließend hauptsächlich mit quantitativen Methoden ausgewertet, mit einigen qualitativen Einblicken.

Die wichtigsten Ergebnisse der Studie waren, dass der Großteil der Lernenden auf der Plattform sich durch die sozialen Kontakte und die kulturellen Diversität der Leute, die an Sprachen interessiert sind und mit denen Zusammenarbeit möglich ist, motivieren lässt. Zusätzlich spielt die Interaktivität der Webseite und die verschiedenen Möglichkeiten unterschiedliche Sprachen zu lernen, eine wichtige Rolle für Motivation. Ein weiteres essentielles Ergebnis war speziell auf Einstellungen und Leistung ausgerichtet. Je besser die Einstellung zur Zielsprache, desto eher sind Lernende motiviert. Genauso gilt das für Leistung. Die Motivation war besonders dann hoch, wenn Lernende Erfolg hatten.

Der Einsatz von Peer Learning Plattformen in Schulklassen kann auch empfohlen werden, jedoch mit einigen Einschränkungen. Peer Learning Webseiten sind nur motivierend, wenn sie für ein angemessenes Sprachlevel eingesetzt werden, die Aufgabenstellungen abwechslungsreich gestellt werden und wenn der Lernprozess von einer Lehrperson begleitet wird.

Appendix D: Curriculum Vitae

Personal Data	Name:	Silvia Nittnaus
	Date of Birth:	18. April 1988
	Place of Birth:	Eisenstadt
	Nationality:	Austria
	E-Mail Address:	silvia_nittnaus@hotmail.com
Education	Supplementary module “German as a Second and Foreign language” (2012-2013)	
	Supplementary university course “Ethics” (2008-2013)	
	University of Vienna - English and Psychology/Philosophy – Teacher Education Program (since 2007)	
	Study abroad in the USA, Central College; Pella, Iowa (2010/2011)	
	Höhere Lehranstalt für Wirtschaft am Pannoneum, 7100 Neusiedl am See (2002-2007)	
Working Experience	Marketing assistant at Raiffeisen Landesbank Wien/Niederösterreich for web services and social media, event support, (since 2007, one year break for study abroad)	
	Language assistant for German at Central College in Pella, Iowa (USA), (Academic year 2010/2011)	
	Pedagogic supervisor at Kids Club Neusiedl am See (July/August 2011)	
	Summer camp counselor at Ferienhort am Wolfgangsee, (July/August 2009)	
	Private tutoring and English courses (since 2008)	
Languages	German (Native Language)	
	English (C2)	
	French (A2)	
	Hungarian (A1)	