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Migrant pupils as motivated agents in English primary schools: a qualitative multiple case study

**MA TESOL Conference: 'How can we
promote long-term motivation in our
learners?' 27th June, 2019, Clothworkers
South Building, LT2, 10:40 – 11:00.
University of Leeds: Leeds, UK.**

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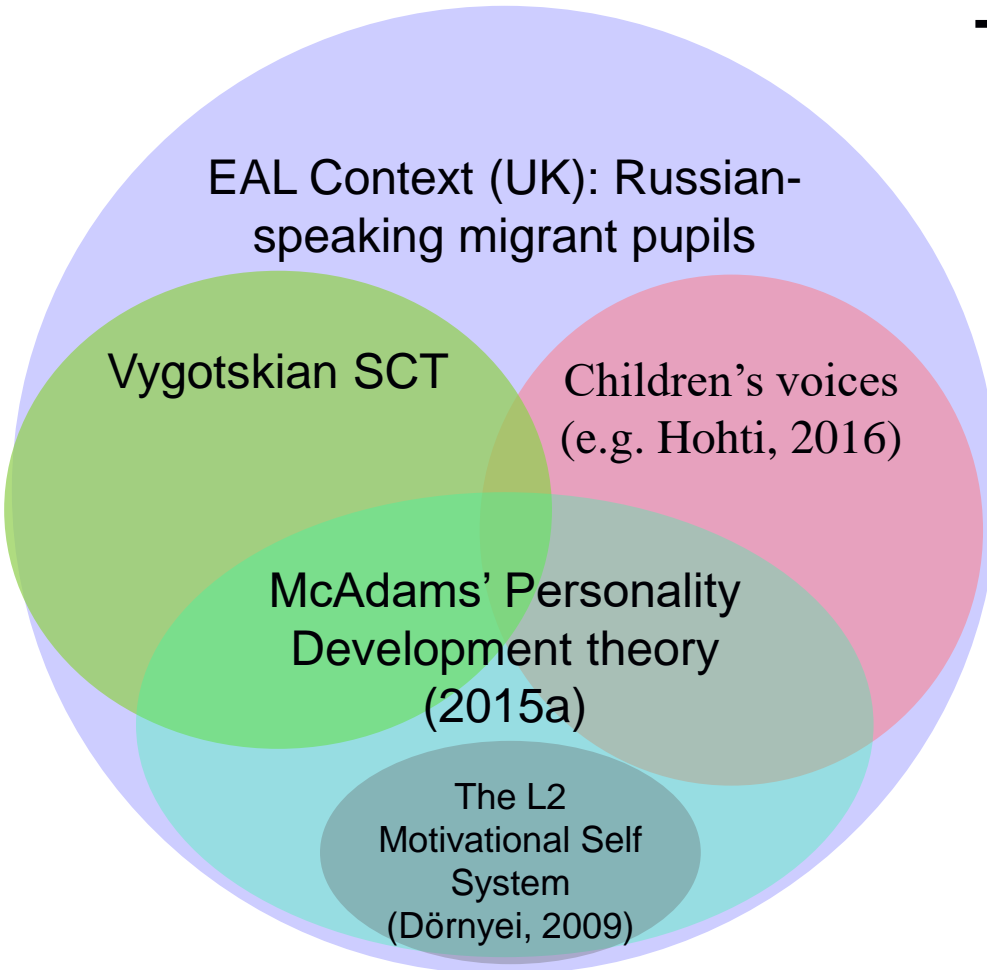
Background

Learning motivation of migrant EAL (English as an Additional Language) children of primary age is underexplored in an English context or abroad.

Middle childhood (7-11 y.o.) (not specifically migrant) children's motivation in learning has often been studied through the lens of Ryan and Deci's (2006; 2000) Self-Determination theory (e.g. Barton et al., 2009; Robins, 2012; Bakx et al., 2019).

Primary level pupils are universally considered to be 'inherently' interested in learning at this age, being curious and engaged (Robins, 2012; Taylor, 2013b).

From 2005 until 2014 only 5.67% of studies in LL motivation focused on the primary (20% in secondary; 51.64% in tertiary) age group (Boo et al., 2015).

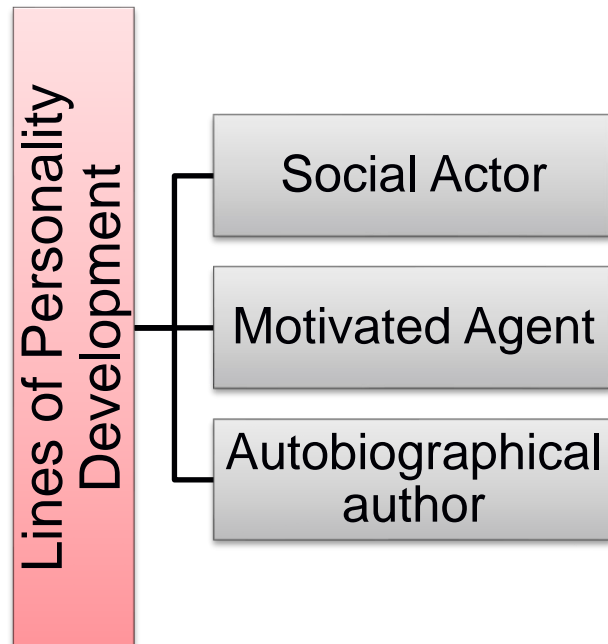


Theoretical Framework

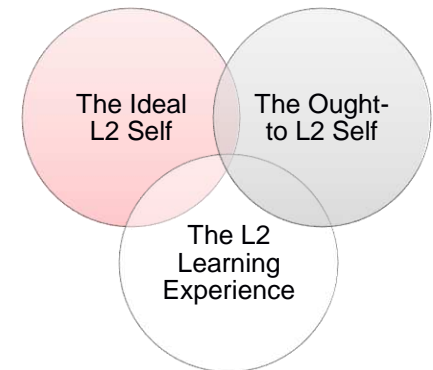
- Learning and development as 'social and cultural rather than individual phenomena' without offering a 'definitive model' (Kozulin et al., 2003, p.1).
- Change of sociocultural environment, and consequently language, influences overall psychological and personality development process (Lantolf and Poehner, 2014; Vygotsky, 2005)
- Attention to 'how the child experiences the situation' rather than 'the situation in itself' (Vygotsky, 1998, p.294).

McAdams' Personality Development theory

(2015a; 2015b, 2015c)



'What do they want (and value)?' in the context of their new L2 schools
(McAdams, 2015a, p.193)



RQ: How do Russian-speaking migrant pupils express their motivated agent line of personality development in the context of their experiences/issues?

Methods of data collection

Data sample

Ethnographic participant observations during 7-month period, 'shadowing', (LeCompte and Schensul, 2010); including chance conversations, 'detached' observations (Gillham, 2000)

Semi-structured interviews using creative elicitation techniques with each child ('researcher-initiated stimuli' (LeCompte and Schensul, 2010, p. 177))

1 Open-ended and 1 semi-structured interview: with the participants' parents, class teachers and/or EAL TAs.

Russian-speaking migrant pupils	Interviews with children	Observations	Parents	Class teachers, EAL coordinators
Multiple Case Study				
5 recently arrived Russian-speaking pupils at Key stage two	30 min twice a month during 7 months	7 months	5 Parents 1-hour-interviews	5 class teachers 1-hour-interviews
Total	63 interviews	463 photos 125 days	9	7
Duration: 42h45min	26h17 min Average 27.44min	Average 24.8 days with each pupil	14h28min Average 54.2 min	



Data	Yulia	Rita	Alisa	Katerina	Ivan
Country of birth	Belarus	Russia	Russia	Russia	Ukraine
Age	9	10	8	7	9
Time period spent in the UK	2 months	1 year 2 months	1 year 4 months	3 years	5 years 10 months
Previous exposure to English	Minimal, 'Beginner'	Minimal, 'Beginner'	Minimal, 'Beginner'	No, 'Absolute Beginner'	No, 'Absolute Beginner'
Key Stage 2 year	Year 5	Year 6	Year 4	Year 3	Year 5
School	School B	School C	School C	School A	School C



Research Question

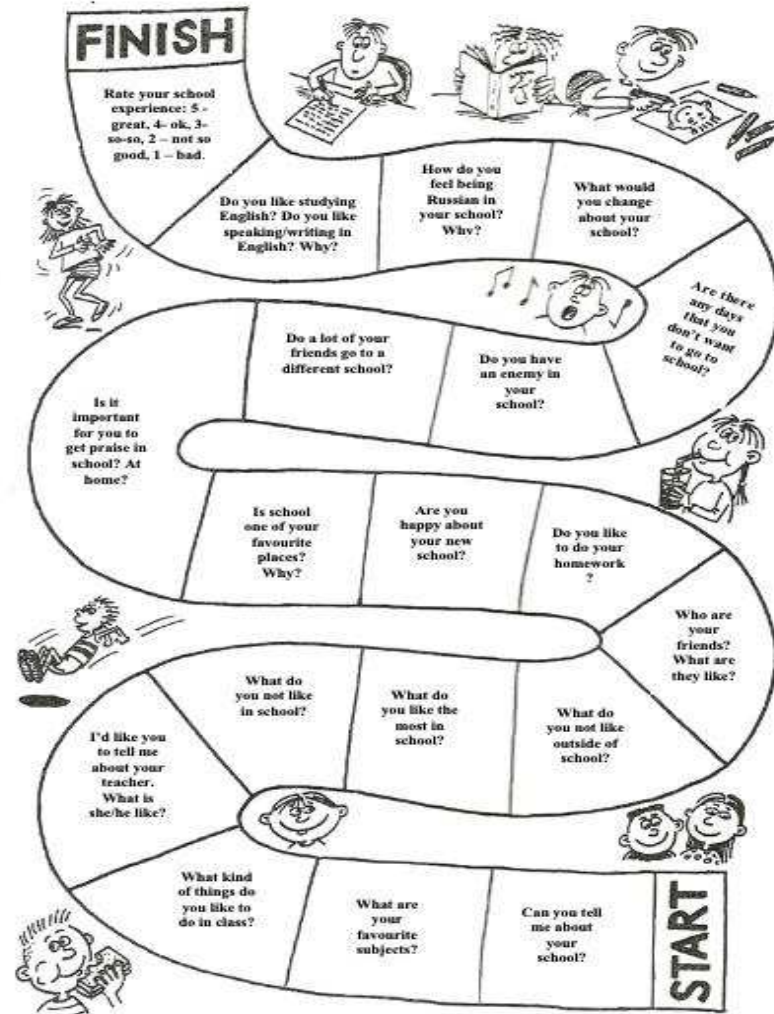
How do they express their motivated agent line of personality development in the context of their experiences/issues?

Creative technique

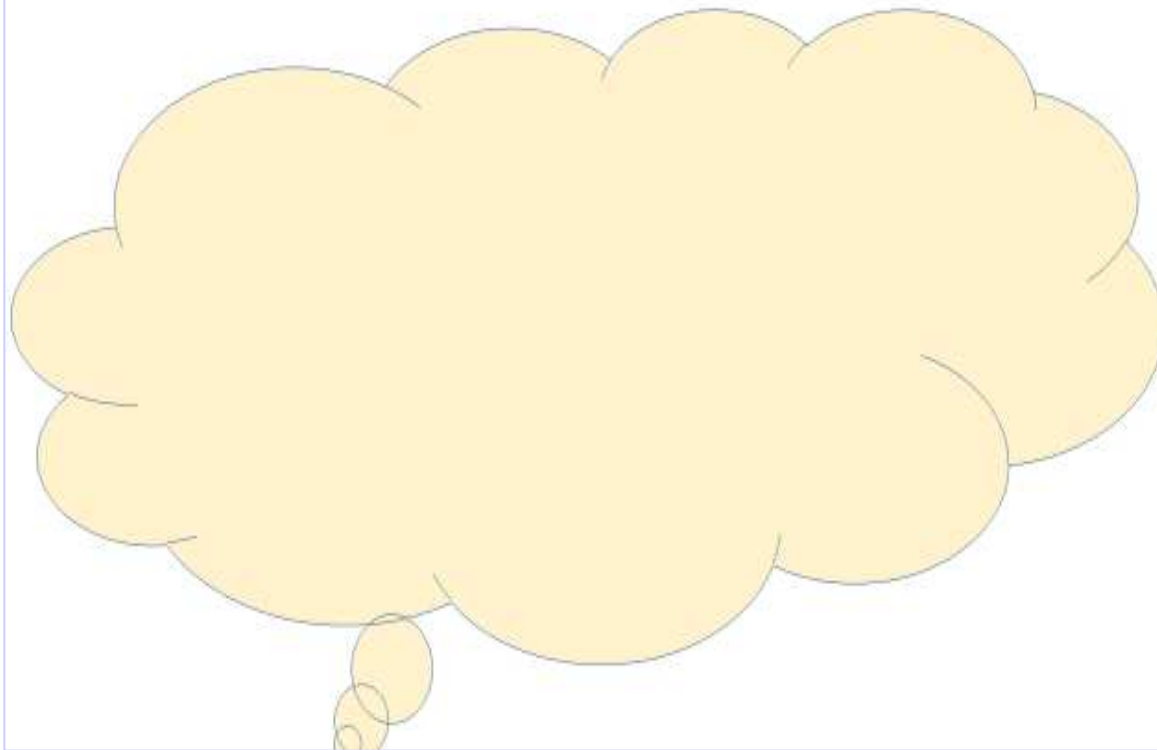
Drawing 'My hopes and dreams'

The 'interview-through-game'
(adapted from Toth, 1995, p.58)

The 'interview-through-game'



My hopes and dreams



Could you please draw your hopes and dreams in school, or in general, or just what you would like to have or happen, linked with English, or not?

What did you draw?
What does it mean?

Migrant pupils as motivated agents expressed:

- Cross-curricular motivations: learning using L2
- The L2 and mathematical literacy motivations: learning L2
- Possible self-guides: ideal self, ideal multilingual self, parental 'desire in language'

Theme: Cross-curricular motivations: learning using L2

A lack of a knowledge gain causes a lack of interest

English school is a 'much better place than home' because 'it's interesting'
(Rita, 11 y.o., 2016-2017).

L: Do you like school?

K: No!

L: Why not?

K: Sometimes only, when you come! No other time!

(Katerina, 7 y.o., 2016)

What did you like in your school?

K: I liked... I liked...

L: Читать? Писать? [Reading?
Writing?]

K: I liked...playing with you. I liked you.

(Katerina, 7 y.o., 2017)

Theme: Cross-curricular motivations: learning using L2

A lack of a knowledge gain causes a lack of interest (Cont.)

Interest is not a cause of learning, but a consequence of learning (Schmidt and Rotgans, 2017)

L: What do you like the most in school? What is the most favourite?

'I like Fridays because on Friday we can have lots of rest'

(Alisa, 8 y.o., 2016)

A: Well, when we rest...

(Alisa, 8 y.o., 2016)

Y (Yulia): Assembly...It seemed that it was a bit boring.

L: What did you do there?

'I have learned "nothing"
(Katerina, 7 y.o., 2016)

Y: Well we were talking about something, about some things... **Well maybe it was interesting, but I didn't understand it.** (Yulia, 9 y.o., 2016)

Theme: Cross-curricular motivations: learning using L2

Approval and acknowledgement: a need to be/feel 'smart'

'Half of the class cannot do what I can do' (Rita, 11 y.o., 2016)

'I am worse than other children, who, yes... who should be worse than me [in attainment]' (Ibid., 2017).

'She needs approval. (...) It is important for her, this approval from others'.
Praise for Alisa is 'the ultimate end point'

(Alisa's mother, 2017)

'Because I want to get points and win!'

(Alisa, 8 y.o., 2016)

Theme: The L2 and mathematical literacy motivations: learning L2

L2 motivation:

- holistic (towards a language) and
- atomistic (as part of L2 learning in class).

L: Do you need English?

A: Yes, because...just need!

L: Why?

A: Love it.

L: Do you love it?

A: Yes.

(Alisa, 8 y.o., 2017)

L: Do you like the English language?

K: Yes!

L: Do you like learning English?

K: No.

L: If you could choose, would you stop learning it?

K: Yes.

(Katerina, 7 y.o., 2016)

Theme: The L2 and mathematical literacy motivations: learning L2

L2 motivation (Cont.)

L: Do you like learning English?

R: Well, learning, probably not. But talking – yes.

(Rita, 11 y.o., 2016)

L: What is your most favourite thing in learning English? When you think, “Great, I am learning English!”

Y: PE!

L: (Smiles) Why?

Y: Because in PE language is not needed but showing!

(Yuia, 9 y.o., 2016)

‘I like maybe to talk more.

Writing...I...so-so’

(Yulia, 9 y.o., 2016)

‘Literacy is just writing stories’

(Katerina, 7 y.o., 2017)

Theme: Possible self-guides of Russian-speaking migrant pupils

Ideal Bi/Multilingual self

‘A horse that flies to school and speaks Russian’

(Katerina, 7 y.o., 2016)

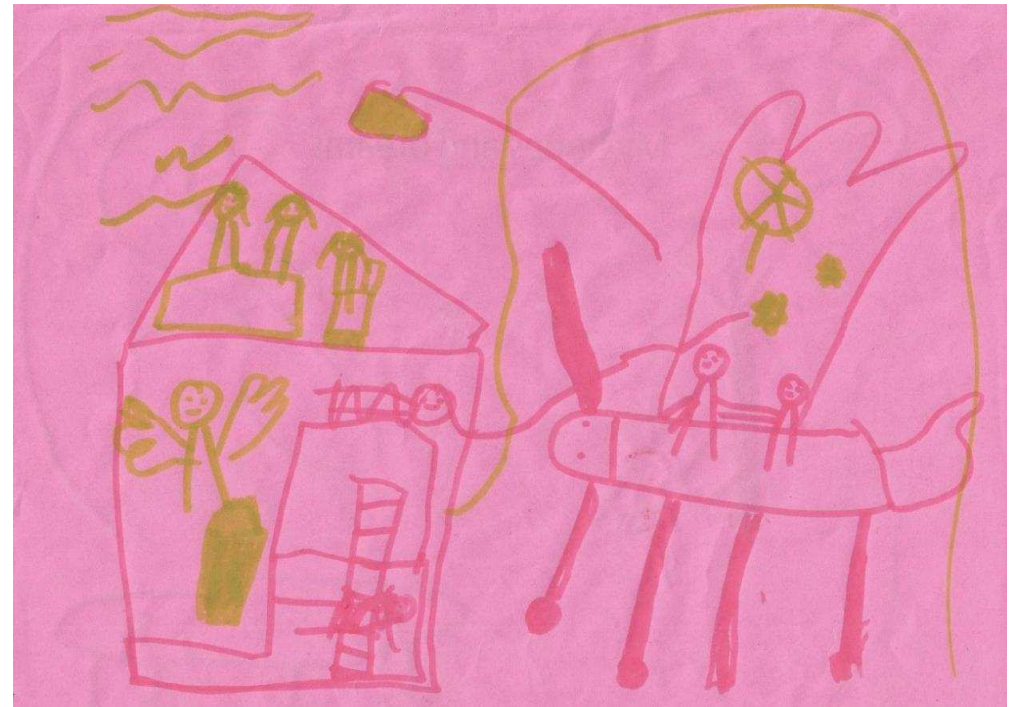
L: А ты бы хотела бы учить французский в будущем?
(‘Would you like to study French in the future?’)

A: Да.
(‘Yes.’)

L: Would you like to study French in the future?

A: Yes.

(Alisa, 8 y.o., 2017)



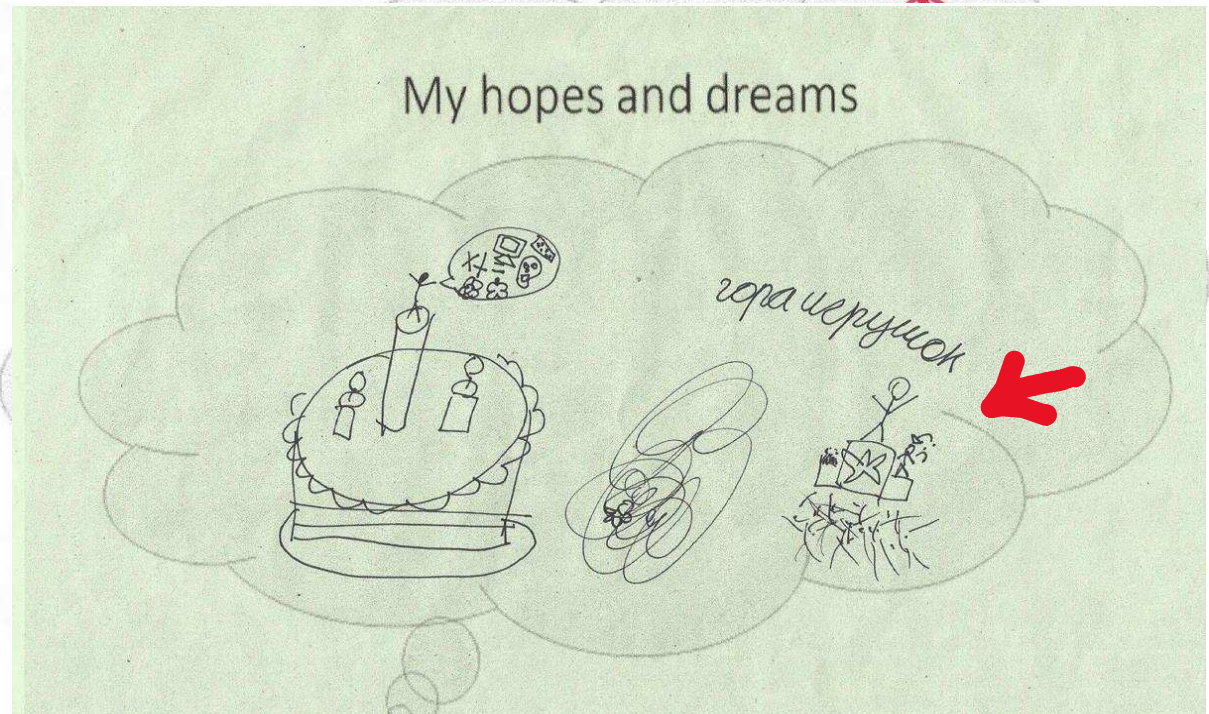
Multilingual view of L2 motivation (Henry, 2017)

Theme: Possible self-guides of Russian-speaking migrant pupils

Ideal selves: L2, self-worth, and voice

Voice, self-worth, and L2 proficiency (Katerina, 7 y.o., 2017), self-worth (being 'important') and L2 proficiency (Katerina, 7 y.o., 2017), self-worth (being 'important') and L2 proficiency (Katerina, 7 y.o., 2017), self-worth (being 'important') and L2 proficiency (Katerina, 7 y.o., 2017)

'To be a good pupil'
A: I will be a good pupil now.
(Yulia, 9 y.o., 2018-17)
I'm sitting at the table, teachers
had, we had a teacher. But
L: And what do you tell
strict, but we didn't listen
everyone else, figures
we were just standing and
in front of Alisa?
school, I am the most
just stood on tables (laugh
important
L: Is this your dream?
important, 6 y.o., 2017)
K: Yes, this is what I dream
the most to happen in the
(Katerina, 7 y.o., 2017)



Theme: Possible self-guides of Russian-speaking migrant pupils

Desire in language: 'child as a project'

Kramsch (2006)

Mensel and Deconinck (2017)

(Hallden, 1991; Vincent and Ball, 2007)

Yulia: I am scared of making a mistake.

L: Why?

Y: Mum will scold me if I write incorrectly.

(Yulia, 9 y.o., 2017)

Mum... makes me', 'Mum said that I need to prepare for the exam' (Ivan, 9 y.o., 2016)

Yulia's mother 'invests everything in Yulia, and she expects a lot from 'I emphasised the importance of her speaking English. That it is important now and Yulia' will be useful later. And by herself, she, yes, understands. Now she already feels confident in it. In other words, she... is not afraid to say something 'incorrectly.'

(Yulia's EAL TA, 2017)

(Alisa's mother, 2016)

Conclusions and implications

- Pupils with clearer future vision including their academic future vision had fewer overt (observed) and covert (reported) issues in relation to well-being.
- The ideal selves signalled context-related underlying issues reflected in the wishes for self-worth and voice (freedom of expression, fairness in learning).
- Teachers of migrant primary pupils should aim to increase pupils' knowledge gain rather than focus on their interest in learning.
- More distant future visions (long-term goals) can potentially be used as a means of understanding (e.g. through an activity of the drawing 'My hopes and dreams') and preventing migrant pupils' well-being issues in an L2 learning environment.
- More research is needed to explore the ways migrant children's future vision might help identify their well-being issues in the present.

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Case	October/November	November / December	January	February	February / March	April/May
Yulia	Being a 'good pupil', Proficiency in L2	To live in England and have more friends in the future Proficiency in L2	Being a 'good pupil', Proficiency in L2 To have a dog in L2 country	No dreams because 'all is fine' House in L2 country	Being a 'good pupil', Proficiency in L2	No dreams in school Have sweets at home
Rita	Pass exams (SATs) L2 motivation to teach English in future or to work as a translator in England Or teacher L2 in L1 country	(no interview focusing on dreams/ hopes)	Pass exams (SATs) and to pass GCSEs for future education	Pass exams (SATs) for a good education To be an L2 interpreter because she translates for parents. Does not see herself living in England and speaking English in future, and focuses on test results Go to L1 country. Finish reading books in L1 and L2. Have fun in school trip.	Pass exams (SATs) because of future job Higher or similar L2 proficiency as compared to L1 proficiency When I ask her about her dreams in school, Rita says she wants to go to a restaurant	Pass exams (SATs) Go to L1 country Go to Wales (holiday trips dream) Experience of having fun during school performance in summer (summer show)