THE TEACHER'S ROLE IN GENERATING AND MAINTAINING THE MOTIVATION OF ADULT LEARNERS OF ENGLISH IN A CORPORATE ENVIRONMENT: A PILOT STUDY

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Abstract: It has been confirmed by numerous studies that teachers play a significant role in creating and maintaining the motivation of learners of English as a foreign language (see for example, Dörnyei & Csizér (1998); Mezei & Csizér (2005); Roth et al. (2007); Radel et al. (2010); Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011)). Nevertheless, if we narrow down the scope of inquiry to the motivation of adult learners of English aged between 25 and 60, in an English as a foreign language (EFL) context, we can find very few empirical studies. Some exceptions are Shoaib and Dörnyei's (2005), Szaszkó's (2007), and Murray's (2011) research of adult learners of English. Even though all of the above studies are concerned with the motivation of adult learners, none of them address specifically the teacher's impact on motivation, let alone in a corporate environment. In order to fill this niche and investigate this impact, two semi-structured interview guides (one for students, and one for human resources managers) were developed, validated, and piloted. The data elicited during the interviews proved that the instruments were valid, and the findings underpin the importance of teacher - learner communication, tailor-made teaching and the professionalism of the teacher in enhancing adult learners' motivation in a corporate context.

Keywords: motivation, adult learners, corporate context, validation, piloting

1 Introduction

This paper describes the development of two qualitative instruments – two interview guides – through the process of validation and piloting. The aim of these instruments was to reveal what adult learners of English and human resources Managers thought of the role of the teacher in generating and maintaining the motivation of adult learners of English in a corporate setting. In order to develop reliable tools for this purpose, semi-structured interview guides were devised through an eight-step validation process based on Prescott's (2011) model.

As a first step, the relevant literature was reviewed, which was followed by self-reflection and brainstorming on the author's experience. This, in turn, led to formulating the research question, and the first draft of the interview guides, whose expert reviewed versions were subsequently piloted with a learner and a human resources manager. After refining some of the questions, two more students and one more human resources manager were interviewed. The purpose of these cyclical steps was to gain more and more valuable feedback and at the same time obtain new insights in order to arrive at the final version of the interview guides.

The data elicited during the interviews proved that the instruments were capable of yielding rich data to answer the research questions and highlighted additional aspects that might be incorporated into the interview guides when they would next be applied on a bigger scale. The detailed description of the process of validation and piloting served a double purpose. On the one hand, it ensured the trustworthiness of the interview guides, on the other hand, it provides help for novice researchers who would like to devise similar instruments.

2 Rationale

As a teacher of EFL and ESP at a Hungarian corporation, I have set out on a personal quest with growing curiosity about how to motivate adult learners of English in a corporate environment. This partly can be explained by the fact that motivated learners facilitate teachers' work, and at the same time and more importantly, motivation is conducive to the process of language learning, and beside other individual differences, it plays a key role in accounting for the differential success in second language acquisition (SLA). This has been confirmed by several studies that investigated the relationship between motivational variables and second language (L2) achievement (see e.g., Gardner, 1985, 2006; Noel's 2001 adaptation of Deci and Ryan's 1985 self-determination theory; or Dörnyei and Clément, 2001). L2 motivation has long attracted the attention of applied linguists and researchers and owing to the complexity of the phenomenon, it will presumably remain a field of scientific enquiry. As Schumann (2015) puts it:

> [d]ifferent conceptualizations of SLA motivation will continue to be proposed and will continue to inform our notions of the phenomenon. In a species capable of generating symbolic nonmaterial constructs that cannot be isolated as physical entities but only as conceptualizations built out of other concepts, the number of possible formulations of the phenomena is potentially infinite. (p. 12)

Apart from my genuine curiosity and the significance of motivation in SLA, the other reason for my resolution to investigate how to motivate adult learners of English was to devise a teacher-focused motivational model that is applicable in similar corporate contexts. As a result of my previous study in motivation (Kálmán, 2012), which involved conducting interviews with human resources managers of Hungarian corporations, it became clear that in the case of onsite corporate language courses, there is a need for a comprehensive teacher-focused model that guarantees the efficiency and success of language courses the employees participate in. As one of the human resources managers stated:

> [i]t would be the responsibility of private language schools to train their teachers how to motivate learners in a corporate setting and supervise what their employees do, but unfortunately, in my experience this is not the case. It would be much better if companies like ours could come up with a comprehensive but professional guideline that forms the basis of language educational tenders so that applying language schools could be familiar with the requirements we would like them and their teachers to meet. (HR 1, pp. 5-6)

Such a model would not only be beneficial for corporations, but private language schools and language teachers as well, so that they can increase their standards of services and better meet the expectations of their clients. Thus I decided to conduct research to explore both how teachers can contribute to motivating adult learners of English in this particular

context and what expectations corporations have of teachers of English to motivate their employees in onsite language courses.

3 Context

The organisation where the research was carried out is a Hungarian state-owned corporation (from now on referred to as the Company in this study) active in the energy and telecommunications industries, whose corporate culture supports life-long learning. While in the first half of the 2000s, its employees' goal was generally to pass the B2 level English language exam, since the middle of the last decade, their focus has shifted towards the C1 level and specialised language courses. Today, having a B2 English language certificate is a prerequisite for new company entrants, and the emphasis is placed on maintaining or improving this already existing knowledge by preparing learners for a C1 language exam, or alternatively, learning business English, specialising either in the language of the electricity industry, or attending skills courses that train attendees in English presentation or negotiation techniques. Participation in the courses is optional, and learning takes place in a one-to-one setting or in small groups of maximum four members.

4 Qualitative Design

To find out what role the teacher plays in motivating adult learners in a corporate environment and to provide the necessary depth and richness of information, qualitative research seemed to be the best method, as an interpretive-descriptive approach is more suited to describe the complex nature of motivation. As Dörnyei (2007) claims, "qualitative methods are useful for making sense of highly complex situations" (p. 30). This is also affirmed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), according to whom humans are the primary data-gathering instruments, as an interviewer acting as "human-as-instrument" is the only instrument which is flexible enough to capture the complexity, subtlety, and constantly changing situation, which is the human experience (p. 39). The patterns that emerge after close observation, careful documentation and thoughtful analysis of the interview transcripts yield a rich source of data that lead to contextual findings valid for the particular micro-context but not for making sweeping generalisations. Duff (2007) emphasises that instead of seeking a generalisable 'correct interpretation', qualitative research aims to broaden the repertoire of possible interpretations of individual human experience. His idea resonates with Schumann's (2015) stance on current motivation research, which prioritises individual accounts over groups:

> [t]he individual is the entity of concern, and case studies become recognised as the appropriate level of granularity for understanding motivation trajectories in SLA. It is wonderful to hear the learners' voices characterising their motivation. In traditional research these voices were silenced in statistical analyses, and the complex variation within individuals which characterises SLA was hidden. (p. 11)

Apart from the theoretical justifications described above, I have a personal inclination for the qualitative method expressed by Punch (2005) as follows, "Some people prefer, for a variety of reasons, one approach over the other. This may involve paradigm and philosophical issues, but there is often also a subconscious temperament factor at work" (p. 240). Deep understanding of underlying patterns is only attainable through continuous feedback in any

kind of human interaction, which is made possible by reflexive, ongoing, open communication. Patton (2002) aptly describes the essence of qualitative research in the following sentences: "Go forth now. Go forth and question. Ask and listen. The world is just beginning to open up to you." (p. 278)

5 The validation process

The steps of the validation process involve designing the research instruments based on the relevant literature and guaranteeing the validity of the instruments through the steps of the validation process described in this section. For the design of the research instruments, Glaser and Strauss' (1967) explicit requirement of adapting a "tabula rasa" approach, according to which results emerge naturally in a qualitative inquiry without any biased interference of the researcher seemed difficult and unnatural to identify with. Having been teaching adults for two decades and constantly mulling over how to motivate them better, I found Tashakkori and Teddlie's (2003) flexible approach more lifelike and plausible, as they claim that "the tabula rasa assumption is simply naive" (p. 66), as no researcher starts a study without having at least some ideas on the questions investigated. Miles and Huberman (1994) go a step further when they claim that it is the researcher's background knowledge that helps them to see and decipher details, complexities and subtleties, as well as to decide what kind of questions to ask. This perspective seemed appropriate in my case.

Therefore, based on the above considerations, I concluded that I would devise two semi-structured interview guides: one for the students and one for human resources managers. I opted for the semi-structured format, as Wallace (1998) maintains this format combines "a certain degree of control with a certain amount of freedom to develop the interview". (p. 147) In order to ensure the validity or trustworthiness – as it is often referred to in qualitative approaches – of the instruments, the interview guides were based on and subjected to eight steps of validation based on Prescott's (2011) model. This validation process guaranteed that the instruments measured what they meant to measure, and in addition, it helped me reduce ambiguity, reformulate leading questions or stressful questions. The eight steps of the validation process were as follows:

1. reviewing the literature,
2. carrying out self-reflection and brainstorming about motivating adult learners in a corporate context,
3. conducting a self-interview about what I consider crucial in motivating adult learners in a corporate context,
4. formulating the research questions,
5. making the first draft of the two interview guides,
6. creating the second drafts based on an expert's review of the first drafts,
7. revising the interview guides based on the lessons of the first interviews,
8. finalising the two semi-structured interview guides.

5.1 Review of the literature

In order to find out what role is attributed to teachers in generating and maintaining motivation in general and in motivating adult learners in particular, I reviewed the relevant literature in the field (Step 1 of the validation process), which provided evidence that teachers

play a significant role in creating and maintaining a motivating environment. This has been confirmed by numerous studies. To name but a few, Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) studied 200 Hungarian teachers of English, and they concluded that the participating teachers rated their own behaviour as an extremely underutilised motivational factor. In their study, the importance attached to the items related to teachers' motivational impact greatly exceeded the frequency of their use. Mezei and Csizér (2005) examined the relationship between a particular teacher's motivational impact on motivated learning behaviour and confirmed its critical role: the study revealed that importance of the teacher's role in creating a pleasant and inspirational environment in the lessons, radiating enthusiasm and a positive attitude, all of which affect and inspire learners. Roth et al. (2007) claimed that teachers' self-reported autonomous motivation for teaching promoted students' self-reported autonomous motivation for learning, whereas Radel et al. (2010) verified that motivated teachers increase learners' motivation: their study confirmed that learners made inferences about how intrinsically motivated their tutors were based on their teaching style, and these inferences, in turn, affected their own intrinsic motivation for the activity. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) went even further and claimed that almost everything a teacher does in the classroom has a motivational influence on students, which makes teacher behaviour a powerful motivational tool. This claim was underpinned by Anderman and Anderman (2010), who attested that teachers can and do impact student motivation.

If we turn our attention to the motivation of adult learners of English in an English as a foreign language (EFL) context we can find very few empirical studies. Some exceptions are Shoaib and Dörnyei's (2005) qualitative interviews with adult learners focusing on the participants' motivational history, Szaszkó's (2007) study that investigated the effects of intercultural contacts on adult Hungarians' motivation, and Murray's (2011) study of Japanese adult learners of English. There exist comparative studies involving adult learners as well: Kormos and Csizér's (2008) study conducted in Hungary on Dörnyei's (2009) L2 motivational self-system; and Tatsuya, Taguchi, Magid, and Papi's (2009) similar studies conducted in Japan, China and Iran.

Even though all of these studies are concerned (at least partly) with the motivation of adult learners of English, none of them addresses specifically the teacher's impact on the motivation of adult learners, let alone in a corporate environment. Interestingly, in Hungary where corporate language courses take a big bite out of the Hungarian adult educational market and the majority of state-owned and private corporations promote the maintenance and development of the linguistic skills of their workforce (particularly those of English), to my knowledge, not a single study has been conducted in a corporate environment.

5.2 Self-reflection and brain-storming

Having reviewed the literature (Step 1 of the validation process), I proceeded to the second point on the eight-point validation scale: self-reflection and brainstorming based on the literature and my own teaching experience to summarise what I consider key in generating and maintaining the motivation of adult learners in a corporate context. The exercise of introspection and brainstorming I carried out yielded three broad emerging areas:

1. **Teacher - Learner communication:** in the context of an English lesson, teacher - learner communication is a broad concept that on a theoretical level encompasses every opportunity that an English lesson offers for the students to

speak about anything at their free will. It involves some of the most recognised features of the Direct Method or Communicative Language Learning, such as an emphasis on learning through interaction in the target language, the physical utterance of words and sentences, the more the better, and the more frequently the better (Nunan, 1991). However, it goes beyond that, as due to the repetitive nature of the lessons, learning English might act like psychotherapy, and the joy students derive from it further motivates them unwittingly. This can be explained by the fact that language lessons provide students with ample opportunities to have meaningful conversations about practically anything including topics that they are happy to get off their chest, particularly in an occasionally stressful working environment. Interestingly, Anderson's (1997) conceptualisation of psychotherapy: "a language system and a linguistic event in which people are engaged in a collaborative relationship and conversation – a mutual endeavour toward possibility" (p. 2) might very well be applied to describe a conversation in a language lesson, as well. The teacher's role is crucial in identifying and assessing the extent of this need, i.e., the students' desire to share anything with the teacher. If this need is met, it results in a positive learning experience, which in turn enhances the student's motivation, as has been confirmed by many (see e.g., Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Williams & Burden, 1997). Secondly, teacher - learner communication refers to the quality of communication between learners and teachers by breaking down barriers and eliminating hierarchical distances between them, i.e., treating learners as equals; and utilising the teachers' verbal arsenal in such a way that encourages students and enhances their self-confidence.

2. **Tailor-made focus**: language learners are happy to talk about what surrounds them and what is related to them in their current lives, and additionally, to a lesser extent, things that will be relevant for them in achieving their professional and life aims. In this way, their *ideal-selves* and *mental imagery* of themselves are strengthened, which increases their language learning motivation (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009). The teacher's role is again crucial in identifying and exploiting this motivational tool, the use of which is beneficial for the learner.

3. **Professionalism of the teacher:** this concept focuses on what teachers do in order to attain and maintain their professionalism and enthusiasm to exert a positive influence on learners' motivation. The findings of a previous study (Kálmán, 2015) conducted in a similar context with the participation of 60 adult learners helped me define which aspects of the teacher's professionalism promote adult learners' motivation most. In order of importance, the first ten items were as follows: 1, Has a deep knowledge of the English language; 2, Speaks English very well; 3, Has a lot of experience in teaching; 4, Trains herself/himself regularly; 5, Always prepares for the lessons; 6, Corrects homework by the next lesson; 7, Has the right qualifications; 8, Has good references; 9, Her/His lessons are part of a puzzle.

Having completed Step 2 on the scale, I went on to conduct a self-interview (Step 3 of the validation process) based on Prescott's (2011) model and asked myself two questions:

- How can teachers generate motivation in adult learners of English?
- How can teachers maintain motivation in adult learners of English?

According to Prescott's (2011) model, the self-interview serves a triple purpose, all of which I wanted to take advantage of in my own research. First and foremost, I wanted to utilise my own knowledge and experience of teaching accumulated over the years. Second, I wanted to be aware of my own assumptions and prejudices in order to maintain a sufficient distance when preparing and conducting the interviews. Third, I endeavoured to use multiple data sources and perspectives to increase research validity through triangulation (similarly to the idea of involving two HR managers for the interviews). I then started to write continuously on the three topics that emerged in the brainstorming and I wrote a discursive essay until I felt I had nothing more to say. This yielded five pages of rambling narrative which I then proceeded to evaluate. It contained a lot of repetitions, circuitous generalisations, but it was possible to identify several points of interest.

First, in addition to meeting the basic requirement of a language course, that is to say, teaching the language to the participants, I discovered a wider purpose of the lessons which can be achieved through the verbal interaction in a lesson:

> [t]eaching a language enables the teacher to do far more than transmitting the subject matter (the English language) to the learner. Due to the special nature of this subject, verbal communication in the lessons provides a treasure-chest whose drawers can be filled with motivational tools. Not only are we, teachers able to create an opportunity for the learner to talk about anything that makes them relieved, happy or more confident, but through this open and facilitative role, we can also spin a web of trust and interest in the background that acts as a source of motivation over a suspended period of time that learning a language requires. (Self-interview, p. 2)

Another point related to motivation which I consider key is a tailor-made focus on individuals. Since the majority of the courses in the investigated organisation are one-to-one and courses, whereas about 25% of the courses are held with the participation of maximum four learners, it is possible to pay more attention to the needs of each individual and tailor the lessons, the teaching materials, even the pace of learning to the needs of the learners in a way that the teacher regards as ideal for their progress:

> I want to make sure that the learners feel that the lesson is about them and for them. In my experience everybody loves talking about themselves and things related to their lives, so why not give them the opportunity to do so as long as they express themselves in English. It's killing two birds with one stone: they are happy that the lesson is about them and at the same time they can practise the language as they are given as much time as possible to try themselves out and challenge themselves in a linguistic sense as well. (Self-interview, p. 3)

And finally, thinking about the professionalism of the teacher I wish to highlight the following thought, as I strongly agree with Csikszentmihalyi (1997), who claims that a teacher's commitment towards the subject matter is "infectious, that is, instils in students a similar willingness to pursue knowledge" (p. 188):

> I can't help preparing for every single lesson, even after twenty years of teaching and I want my students to see and know that I do so. I know that it motivates them. Seeing

my efforts and dedication they follow suit and start to take learning more and more seriously. I also make sure they know about the training courses I take part in so as to become a better teacher, just as they take every opportunity to develop in their professional lives. I create an environment in which they can't help learning. (Self-interview, p. 5)

The above ideas of brainstorming and self-interview helped me arrive at Steps 4 and 5 of the validation process: formulating the research question and drawing up the questions of the first draft of the interview schedules in Hungarian as I knew that interviews would take place in Hungarian. (see Appendices A1 and A2 for the English translation of the first draft). Below is the research question I would have liked to find answers to:

- What role do teacher - learner communication, tailor-made teaching and the professionalism of a teacher play in motivating adult learners of English in a corporate environment?

5.3 Devising the instruments

The first draft of the interview schedule for the students (Step 5 in the validation process) consisted of four parts (see Appendix A1): a set of introductory questions, three sets of questions addressing the three main topics of the research question (teacher - learner communication, tailor-made teaching, and professionalism), whereas the first draft of the interview schedule for the human resources managers (see Appendix A2) consisted of one set of questions addressing the language education of the organisation in general on the one hand, and on the other, questions related to their employees' motivation in their jobs and the English lessons. Having drawn up the first version of the interview guides I turned to an expert (my supervisor) to comment on the items (Step 6 of the validation). Following her advice, I made several of the questions targeted at adult learners more elaborate, more informal and more personal. For instance, instead of asking the following formal question "How does conversation in class affect your communicative skills?", she encouraged me to use the informal approach and reformulate my question in the following way: "Can you share an experience with me when you felt conversation in class developed your communication skills?" As far as the interview guide targeted at human resources managers is concerned, some of the questions used in the first draft were replaced by questions that were more closely related to the subject of the study. For example: "What do you think of the role of the teacher's professionalism in motivating your employees?" On the basis of the above transformations, many of the items were reformulated and resulted in the expert reviewed draft of the interview schedules (see Appendices B1 and B2). Subsequently, the first trial interviews with a student, and an HR manager were conducted, recorded and transcribed.

All the items proved to be understandable by the participants (1 student and 1 HR manager) and efficient enough to yield a rich source of data. The plentiful data obtained reassured me that it was unnecessary to make any more changes in the questions. Thus I was able to move on to Step 8, the last step of the validation process, conducting two more interviews with adult learners and one more with a HR Manager.

After conducting, recording, and transcribing the interviews, I went on to analyse the data. In order to conduct a fully-fledged qualitative investigation we need to have full transcripts of the recordings that we want to analyse. The interviews were conducted with

three adult learners learning C1 level general English and two human resources managers of the Company, in total. They included the trial interview participants, who will be referred to as Kate (27, Security Expert), and Eve (HR 1), two more students: John (48, Legal Counsel), Peter (41, Director), and one more human resources manager, referred to as Chris (HR 2). The conversations yielded a rich data base of 23,000 words / 50 pages of verbatim transcripts. With this step, the validation process came to an end, and the analysis of the data began.

6 Data Analysis

In order to analyse the data, Crabtree and Miller's (1999) Template Organising Style (TOS) was used. This data analysis method starts out with a template of codes, a so-called code manual, which is based on background information on the topic (brainstorming and self-interview in this case) or on preliminary scanning of the data. The transcribed texts are coded, using this predetermined template. Although this method might contradict the emerging nature of qualitative principles, few researchers start data analysis with no initial ideas and biases, therefore, this analysis method seemed ideal for the purpose of my investigation. In addition, with the help of TOS a large volume of text can be analysed in a focused and time-efficient manner, creating links between extracts. As a first step of the data analysis process, I created the following Code Manual (see Figure 1) along the three key areas of the research questions:

Initial Code Manual		
Teacher - Learner communication	**Tailor-made teaching**	**Professionalism**
• makes sharing possible, • provides opportunities to exchange opinions, • has to be a positive experience, • boosts linguistic development, • uses the appropriate language of instruction.	• ensures attention, • uses personalised materials, • increases self-confidence, • improves language skills in the office, • entails flexible availability of the teacher.	• requires preparedness, • teacher enthusiasm, • training, • good marketing, • people skills, • appropriate feedback, • excellent English, • a lot of teaching experience.

Figure 1. The initial Code Manual

Having established the initial Coding Manual, the coding process was started with the initial coding, which meant highlighting relevant passages and adding a label to the passages. As a second step, within second level coding, all the codes related to one of the three broad areas of the research questions (teacher – learner communication, tailor-made teaching, and professionalism) were formulated and collected on an individual basis. In other words, I collected all the relevant data provided by each participant about professionalism, for instance. As a third step, in third level coding, more abstract commonalities related to one of the three broad areas based on all of the interviewees' accounts (all the interviewees' relevant data on professionalism) were established. Finally, all of the emerging data were collated with the ones of the original code manual and this comparison resulted in the following emerging themes (see Figure 2), which complement the themes of the original Code Manual:

Emerging Themes		
Teacher - Learner communication	**Tailor-made teaching**	**Professionalism**

• *provides a rehearsal stage for meetings, negotiations, international forums,*
    for language exams,
    for business lunches,
• *prevents misunderstanding with clients,*
• acts as a tool to build and test trust,
• transforms the student into a different state of mind,
• stimulates and dynamises,
• relieves stress and angst,
• improves students' social network in the organisation,
• develops emotional attachment.
	• is manifested in the teacher's body language (eye contact, nodding),
	• saves time,
	• *saves time,*
	• is manifested in a triad of attention: communicational, pedagogical and personal attention,
	• acts as a self-confidence booster,
	• increases efficiency,
	• *increases efficiency,*
	• *increases cost-effectiveness.*
		• means professional and practical up-to-dateness (e.g., exam requirements),
		• requires a deep insight into character,
		• *entails good people skills*
		• *requires participation in empathy training, communication training, self-awareness training,*
		• means transmitting self-confidence, enthusiasm, motivation, love of the subject, openness, and sincerity,
		• rather characterises non-native teachers,
		• creates the illusion of hierarchy, as if the student was the boss,
		• requires continuous training.

Figure 2. Emerging themes: themes emerging from the interviews with students are printed in Times New Roman, while themes emerging from the interviews with HR Managers are printed in *Agency FB italics* fonts

7 Results and Discussion

Even though I consider myself an experienced teacher, I was surprised by the richness of the data the interviews yielded and the diversity of the emerging themes the participants contributed that could complement the initial Code Manual based on brainstorming and the self-interview. This section of the study focuses only on the emerging themes, as many of the notions in the initial Code Manual can be taken for granted, whereas the themes that surfaced during the interviews are novel and often surprising and thought-provoking.

7.1 Teacher - Learner communication

Starting with the analysis of data on teacher - learner communication, may be concluded that it proved to be key for both the learners and the HR managers interviewed. As one of the HR managers, Eve put it:

We would like the teachers working for us focus on our employees' communicative skills. Those of us who meet foreign business partners represent our company at international forums, negotiations, meetings, so it is essential for us to be able to communicate in an assertive way. Many of our employees have to use English on a daily basis when they keep in touch with their foreign partners, and obviously we don't want any misunderstanding to occur, particularly if it might cost us enormous amounts of money. (p. 2)

As far as the learners are concerned, teacher - learner communication was confirmed significant from their points of view as well, on grounds of building trust, exchanging opinions, overcoming anxiety, group dynamics, instrumentality, social networking within the organization, and improving interpersonal relationships. Strangely enough, teacher - learner communication, to be precise, gossip was not only mentioned as a tool of building trust, but also as a means of testing it. One of the participants described this in this way:

Gossiping has another advantage, too: you can map your teacher at the beginning and check the extent to which you can trust the teacher, and it is great feedback that it has remained between us, the teacher really kept it to himself, therefore if you have an acute problem that you wouldn't share with anyone, you come to the lesson and you know that your teacher will be understanding and will tell you honestly what he thinks, so I could refer to this as a kind of mini-alliance. (Kate, p. 2)

Another aspect of teacher - learner communication worth highlighting as it was brought up by all the participants is the instrumental benefit it has. This is clearly present in Eve's words, when she talks about the importance of oral skills in the quotation above. If we move on to what these skills mean to the participants, Kate cited conversations in the lesson as a rehearsal stage for the oral language exam, while for John it is a tool to improve his skills required during a business meal:

With foreign partners there is always a semi-formal or totally informal bit, for example chatting during a business dinner. It is so embarrassing when you look at him and say, well, enjoy your meal, and well, ok, you don't gossip with them, you tend to talk about more general things, and for that purpose, training in gossip is excellent. (John, p. 5)

Finally, teacher - learner communication dynamises the lesson. John says that "a good conversation electrifies me, it speeds me up mentally, it jazzes up the lesson" (p. 3). Peter on the same topic shared the following idea with me:

Conversations in the lesson absolutely determine my learning experience, because through oral interaction a personal relationship develops. If the task is not oral, it is very difficult for emotional attachment to develop, so overall I think that oral communication is the most important element of the learning process and it cannot be evaded. (p. 5)

We can see from these examples that each of these aspects contributes to a positive learning experience, which in turn enhances motivation, similarly to a tailor-made way of teaching described in the next section.

7.2 Tailor-made teaching

In connection with tailor-made attention, again a host of new themes emerged compared to the ones in the Code Manual. Tailor-made attention proved to be key in terms of enabling the learner to be the centre of attention, being an efficiency booster and a self-confidence booster. Also, as it turned out, attention can be further divided into a triad: communicational, personal and pedagogical attention. Starting with the latter, let me quote Peter's words:

> There is communicational attention when I get immediate feedback to what I say, there is also personal attention, which is again important, when you feel that habits are being formed, like we drink coffee or something in the lesson or when a special atmosphere is created, and there is pedagogical attention that manifests itself in giving me personalised homework. (p. 7)

John confirms the importance of body language as well, as a key factor in the perception of being attended to:

> A lot depends on eye-contact. It is the eye-contact. If you don't pay attention to somebody, you can't look at them like that. Yes, you got it, you nod. This is something you can't pretend, these are real gestures. (p. 6)

Another surprising feature of tailor-made teaching is that all of the participants mentioned that it acts as a self-confidence booster. Kate expressed this in the following words, "You encourage me, you support me by saying it'll get better, it's a good feeling that I'm attended to, and as a result, people's self-confidence increases, including mine." (p. 5) John had this to say about his self-confidence getting better:

> Generally, generally my course increases my self-confidence, because at the beginning I had this frustration that oh my god, I don't speak well, and then I feel that it went really well, the fact that my teacher pays attention to me increases my self-confidence greatly because he makes me believe that I can do it and I think this whole issue of language learning is a question of self-confidence, because if you believe in yourself that you can do it, then you really can, and more or less correctly, and your self-confidence can even help you get over mistakes if you say something wrong. (p. 7)

The final aspect of tailor made teaching worth emphasising is its efficiency booster feature. Here again, the ideas expressed by both HR managers and the learners were shared. It is not unpredictable that efficiency plays an important role in the operations of a big corporation, therefore Chris' words did not come as a surprise: "We would like teachers to teach our employees as efficiently as possible, both in terms of the time they spend learning English, and of money the company spends on them" (p. 2). However, it surprised me that this was also mentioned by one of the learners, although for a different reason, "If I don't get personalised assignments, maybe I have to work on something that I'm already good at. It's a dead game. It only makes sense if I can practise something I still don't know". (John, p. 5)

These extracts prove that tailor-made teaching also contributes to a positive learning experience, which in turn, similarly to verbalism, enhances motivation. Let us know turn to

the third broad area of the research questions, the professionalism of the teacher and examine what new themes emerged from the data.

7.3 The professionalism of the teacher

The importance of the professionalism of a teacher lies in its quality of being an agent of transfer. From the point of view of this study, it is not only knowledge transfer that counts, but transfer of enthusiasm, motivation, love of the subject, self-confidence, openness, and sincerity, all of which ignite motivation in the learner. First let me present the theme transfer of enthusiasm with Kate's words:

My teacher's enthusiasm has a huge effect on me. It's something that's clearly visible. He is in love with what he does, not only the language, but dealing with people, with the students, as well. The way he explains, he deals with us, he prepares, can be seen in the whole lesson. (p. 6)

It also emerged from the data that learners in this context, as well as the HR managers expect language teachers to have good people skills as well, apart from professional skills. Chris cited "empathy training, communication training and self-awareness training" (p. 3) as possible ways of professional development. In Kate's opinion,

Language teachers, just like any other professional, train themselves all their lives. Not only in their profession, but in their private lives as well, to know more about themselves and others, etc. If you stop at a level and assume that you know everything, which as you know doesn't exist, sooner or later it shows in your work, in your relationship with your students and it triggers a chain reaction, so I think it's very important. (p. 4)

Interestingly, all of the participants have expressed their preference of non-native teachers. John's words aptly summarise this opinion:

Well-prepared non-native teachers are much better. I've had many teachers, both native and non-native, so I have a good basis of comparison. Native teachers in my experience lack structure, don't prepare for the lessons as much as non-native teachers do and take teaching less seriously. They often expected me to tell them what to do in the lesson, what to do in the next lesson, I just got bored with it after a while. (p. 3)

The themes presented above show only a cross section of the ideas that emerged during the interviews, and unfortunately the limitations of this paper do not allow for a more elaborate analysis of the data obtained. Nevertheless, they prove that research into the three broad areas is a very exciting venture with countless nooks and crannies to explore.

8 Conclusion

This paper presented the validation and piloting process of two semi-structured interview instruments that investigate the role of teacher - learner communication, tailor-made teaching and the professionalism of the teacher in motivating adult learners of English in a

corporate environment. The validation process resulted in a semi-structured interview guide that measured what it meant to measure, and furthermore, the process of validating and piloting reduced the ambiguity of some of the original questions, and helped me reformulate leading or stressful questions. The findings of the data analysis confirmed my initial assumptions that these three concepts are crucial in motivating adult learners. Additionally, analysing the data revealed that all three concepts encompass a lot more elements than previously thought (see Figure 2).

It emerged from the data that teacher - learner communication motivates adult learners by providing the learners with a rehearsal stage for their real life challenges (language exams, presentations, negotiations, business lunches). Also, a meaningful conversation transforms learners into a different state of mind by giving learners an experience of flow or DMC (directed motivational current). Besides, a good conversation energises and dynamises the lesson and relieves the angst and stress of learners, which in turn increases their motivation. As far as the second investigated concept is concerned, the data have revealed that tailor-made teaching is conceptualised by learners through the availability, flexibility, and body language of the teacher as well, and is motivating for more reasons than I previously assumed. Newly emerging themes of tailor-made teaching included its time-saving nature for the learner, as well as the benefit of being attended to personally, pedagogically, and verbally. As for professionalism, the third concept investigated, it emerged that apart from the elements described in Section 5.2, adult learners also expect teachers to be aware of up-to-date exam requirements, to have very good people skills, to be self-confident and flexible, preferably non-native, and to create the illusion of hierarchy, as if it was the learners who directed the lessons.

Consequently, after completing the analysis of the data, I realised that in addition to the piloted items of the interview schedule, there were further questions to be included in the instruments, particularly questions related to the emerging themes of this pilot study. Even though the analysis of the data yielded several emerging themes, the interviews proved that I had reasonably well guessed what adult learners in this setting considered key in being motivated by their teachers. Besides the emerging themes discussed in Section 7 of this study, all the codes that comprised the initial Code Manual were mentioned by the participants during the interviews.

On reflection, it might be sensible to transform my research into a mixed methods study consisting of a quantitative questionnaire followed up by a qualitative study. It would enable me to probe the views of a large number of learners with the help of a questionnaire in order to have access to a large amount of (possibly generalisable) quantitative data to help identify important general tendencies, which would then be followed up by an exploratory study to tap into details of the participants' opinions with a view to providing a better understanding of the issues under investigation. Additionally, it would also solve the problem of triangulation, as based on Maxwell's (1992) taxonomy of validity in qualitative research (encompassing descriptive, interpretive, theoretical, evaluative validity and generalizability), descriptive validity is not addressed in my current study due to the lack of a co-researcher. However, this limitation of the study is eliminated by Haverkamp's (2005) view, who claims that "the researcher is the main measurement device in the study. In qualitative research, the researcher's own values, personal history and 'position' on characteristics such as gender, culture, class and age become an integral part of the inquiry" (p. 132).

The question whether the continuation of this pilot study should be an interview study or a mixed methods study remains an issue of future consideration, and independent of the final decision, further research is needed in all three areas of the paper. Within the field of teacher – learner communication, I plan to draw on works related to the evolution of language (Tomasello, 2008), as well as gossip research (Szvetelszky, 2002), and social network analysis (SNA) (Mercer, 2014). As for the field of tailor-made teaching, I wish to study Piaget's egocentric speech theory (Heo et al., 2011), while in the area of professionalism, Pink's (2009) asymptote theory and personal branding theories might provide further inspirations.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A1

The first version of the students' interview guide in English – translated from Hungarian

Thank you for volunteering to take part in the interview. The interview is part of my PhD research, whose aim is to work out a model that is effective and usable in a corporate environment, and with the help of which the motivation of adult learners of English can be enhanced and maintained over the long term. Please answer the questions sincerely. In order to be able to prepare the transcript and analyse the conversation I would like to record our conversation if you agree, but the data obtained from it will be treated anonymously during the research.

Introductory questions:

- How old are you?
- How long have you been learning languages?
- What languages can you speak?
- Why did you start learning English?
- Why are you learning English now?
- What level do you think you are at?
- What level would you like to achieve?
- How can your teacher motivate you in language learning?

Teacher – Learner communication

What do you think of the importance of speech in language learning?
- What role does gossip play in an English lesson?

- What topics do you like talking about in the lesson?
- How do you feel when you can talk about yourself?
- What role do you think telling stories play in learning English?
- Why do you share a story with your teacher or your group mates?
- How do you feel when you speak a lot?
- What topics do / do not have a place in an English lesson?
- Why do you enjoy exchanging opinions with your teacher or the other learners?
- To what extent would you like to meet the expectations of those present in the lesson?
- What do you think of praise?
- How important is conversation in the lesson in assessing your experience of the lesson?
- How do you think conversation in the lesson affects your communicative skills?

Tailor-made teaching

How does it motivate you if you feel you are attended to?
- When do you feel that your teacher is paying attention to you?
- How does it affect you if you feel your teacher is paying attention to you?
- In what life situations do you feel that you are attended to?
- How do you feel if you get personalised handouts?
- How do you feel when you see your name on the handouts?
- Have you ever felt that your self-confidence increased after a lesson? Why?
- Can an English lesson help your daily work, tasks? If yes, how?
- What are your expectations of your teacher in terms of returning your calls and replying to your emails?
- To what extent do you feel it's your task and to what extent it's your teacher's task to determine the goal of your course?
- To what extent do you rely on your teacher outside the classroom?

Professionalism

What do you think a professional language teacher is like?
- How does your teacher's preparedness affect your motivation?
- How does your teacher's enthusiasm affect you?
- How important do you think it is for a language teacher to train him/herself continuously and if you think this is important, how can he/she do it?
- Why is it important for a teacher to prepare for every single lesson?
- How does it affect you if you hear from several sources that you have a good teacher?
- How important do you think it is for a language teacher to be professionally and pedagogically prepared?
- How do you think a language teacher can improve his/her self-awareness / people skills?
- How would you describe an assertive teacher?
- How does it affect you if your language teacher is self-confident?
- How can you give positive and negative feedback to your teacher?

APPENDIX A2

The first version of the HR Managers' interview guide in English – translated from Hungarian

Thank you for volunteering to take part in the interview. The interview is part of my PhD research, whose aim is to work out a model that is effective and usable in a corporate environment, and with the help of which the motivation of adult learners of English can be enhanced and maintained over the long term. Please answer the questions sincerely. In order to be able to prepare the transcript and analyse the conversation I would like to record our conversation if you agree, but the data obtained from it will be treated anonymously during the research.

Questions to the Human Resources Manager

- Please describe the corporation in a few words.
- How is the corporation involved in the international circulation?
- What kind of educational policy does the company have?
- How is the employees' education financed?
- How does language education work?
- What kind of language courses are subsidised?
- How do you select the language schools you work with?
- What expectations do you have of a language school and its teachers?
- To what extent are you satisfied with the language teachers working for your organisation?
- How do you motivate your employees in achieving their goals?
- What expectations do they have to meet?
- Who can take part in maintenance courses?
- Do you consider this opportunity as an additional benefit?
- Does the extent of the subsidy depend on the performance of the employees?
- How flexible are you if an employee does not meet the expectation of the management on time?
- What reprimand does it entail if an employee does not meet the requirements undertaken in his or her educational contract?
- How motivated do you think your language learning employees are?
- What do you think motivates language learning employees?

APPENDIX B1

The expert reviewed version of the students' interview guide in English – translated from Hungarian

Thank you for volunteering to take part in the interview. The interview is part of my PhD research, whose aim is to work out a model that is effective and usable in a corporate environment, and with the help of which the motivation of adult learners of English can be enhanced and maintained over the long term. Please answer the questions sincerely. In order to be able to prepare the transcript and analyse the conversation I would like to record our conversation if you agree, but the data obtained from it will be treated anonymously during the research.

Introductory questions:
- How old are you?
- How did you first meet foreign languages?

- How far did you get in these languages?
- Please recall the time when you decided to learn English. Why did you decide to do so?
- What goals did you have?
- How have they changed over the years?
- How would you describe your knowledge? What level are you at?
- What level would you like to achieve?
- How much time do you spend learning English a week?
- How do you get yourself to learn English?
- In what ways does your teacher help you to learn English as well as possible?
- What do you think your successes and failures can be attributed to?

Teacher – Learner communication

What do you think of the importance of speech in language learning?
- In the lessons we talk about a lot of things. What do you enjoy about exchanging opinions with your teacher or the other learners?
- What topics do you like talking about in the lesson?
- What topics do / do not have a place in an English lesson?
- If you bring up a topic, how important is it for you that your teacher or the other learners should like it?
- What role does gossip play in an English lesson?
- What role do you think telling stories play in learning English?
- How do you feel when you talk about yourself?
- How do you feel when you can speak at great length?
- How important is conversation in the lesson in assessing your experience of the lesson?
- How would you describe your teacher's style and the language he/she uses in the lesson?
- How do you think conversation in the lesson develops your communicative skills?

Tailor-made teaching

How does it motivate you if you feel you are attended to?
- When do you feel that your teacher is paying attention to you?
- Do you feel the same attention elsewhere?
- How do you feel if you get personalised handouts?
- How do you feel when you see your name on the handouts?
- Have you ever felt that your self-confidence increased after a lesson? Please elaborate.
- Can an English lesson help your daily work, tasks? Please tell me in detail.
- What are your expectations of your teacher in terms of returning your calls and replying to your emails?
- To what extent do you rely on your teacher outside the classroom?

Professionalism

What do you think a professional language teacher is like?
- How does your teacher's preparedness affect your motivation?
- How does your teacher's enthusiasm affect you?

- How important do you think it is for a language teacher to train him/herself continuously and if you think this is important, how can he/she do it?
- How can you see if teacher to prepares for every single lesson?
- Why do you think this is important?
- How does it affect you if you hear from several sources that you have a good teacher?
- How can you assess whether your teacher is professionally and pedagogically prepared?
- How do you think a language teacher can improve his/her skills related to teaching, such as self-awareness / people skills?
- How would you describe a self-confident teacher?
- How can you give feedback to your teacher?

APPENDIX B2

The expert reviewed version of the HR Managers' interview guide in English – translated from Hungarian

Thank you for volunteering to take part in the interview. The interview is part of my PhD research, whose aim is to work out a model that is effective and usable in a corporate environment, and with the help of which the motivation of adult learners of English can be enhanced and maintained over the long term. Please answer the questions sincerely. In order to be able to prepare the transcript and analyse the conversation I would like to record our conversation if you agree, but the data obtained from it will be treated anonymously during the research.

Questions to the Human Resources Manager

- Please describe the corporation in a few words.
- How is the corporation involved in the international circulation?
- What kind of educational policy does the company have?
- How is the employees' education financed?
- How does language education work?
- What kind of language courses are subsidised?
- How do you select the language schools you work with?
- What expectations do you have of a language school and its teachers?
- To what extent are you satisfied with the language teachers working for your organisation?
- How do you motivate your employees in achieving their goals?
- How motivated do you think your language learning employees are?
- What do you think motivates language learning employees?
- What do you think of the role oral communication in the classes?
- What do you think of the role of tailor-made teaching?
- What do you think of the role of the teacher's professionalism in motivating your employees?