

The Teacher's Role in Generating and Maintaining the Motivation of Adult Learners of English: A Mixed Methods Study in Hungarian Corporate Contexts

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Abstract : In spite of the existence of numerous second language (L2) motivation theories, the teacher's role in motivating learners has remained an under-researched niche to this day. If we narrow down our focus on the teacher's role on motivating adult learners of English in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context in corporate environments, empirical research is practically non-existent. This study fills the above research niche by exploring the most motivating aspects of the teacher's personality, behaviour, and teaching practices that affect adult learners' L2 motivation in corporate contexts in Hungary. The study was conducted in a wide range of industries in 18 organisations that employ over 250 people in Hungary. In order to triangulate the research, 21 human resources managers, 18 language teachers, and 466 adult learners of English were involved in the investigation by participating in interview studies, and quantitative questionnaire studies that measured ten scales related to the teacher's role, as well as two criterion measure scales of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The qualitative data were analysed using a template organising style, while descriptive, inferential statistics, as well as multivariate statistical techniques, such as correlation and regression analyses, were used for analysing the quantitative data. The results showed that certain aspects of the teacher's personality (thoroughness, enthusiasm, credibility, and flexibility), as well as preparedness, incorporating English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the syllabus, and focusing on the present, proved to be the most salient aspects of the teacher's motivating influence. The regression analyses conducted with the criterion measure scales revealed that 22% of the variance in learners' intrinsic motivation could be explained by the teacher's preparedness and appearance, and 23% of the variance in learners' extrinsic motivation could be attributed to the teacher's personal branding and incorporating ESP in the syllabus. The findings confirm the pivotal role teachers play in motivating L2 learners independent of the context they teach in; and, at the same time, call for further research so that we can better conceptualise the motivating influence of L2 teachers.

Keywords : adult learners, corporate contexts, motivation, teacher's role

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