

THE ROLE OF THE LECTURER IN CREATING A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: MOTIVATING AND ACTIVATING STUDENTS

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Abstract

The academic community of the 21st century is strongly influenced by the principles of modern world cosmopolitanism, the change of didactic regulation and the principles of modernization of the education system. The success and outcomes of the study process directly depend on the ability of the teacher and the learners to communicate and collaborate properly – as well on the established common objectives, the choice of the proper ways of teaching and learning, and the ability to motivate each other. Changes in the student contingent are affected by the change in the number of generations and the increase in the number of study programs for foreign citizens. An intergenerational conflict or cultural conflicts can complicate the learning process and affect learning outcomes. The article presents the data and analysis of the research of the scientific attitude of students and lecturers carried out at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences and the correlation of the data with the results obtained during the teaching experiment. According to this data, the importance of the students' motivation in the study process is discussed by highlighting the importance of the role of the lecturer in increasing motivation of non-humanitarian students for learning languages. The learning environment significantly impacts the level of motivation; thus, the lecturer is responsible for taking part of the responsibility for the increase of motivation by considering the basic psychological needs of the students. Moreover, the results of the teaching experiment confirmed that student's potential of obtaining a sufficient amount of qualitative information and their ability to properly engage in the study process greatly depend on the foreign language level. It has been proved that students that are better at foreign languages are more confident in themselves and their abilities: they not only participate in the learning activities more actively but also reflect on the studying process more bravely by engaging in the difficult but also valuable job of learning.

Keywords: lecturer role, language teaching, communication and collaboration, learning motivation, results of studies, functions of the lecturer

INTRODUCTION

As the post-Soviet bloc countries are actively integrating into the common processes of the European region, higher education institutions are undergoing significant modernisation processes. Changing historical and social circumstances, changes in teaching and learning methods, as well as rising expectations of future professionals create the preconditions for a constant renewal of education, and the aim to meet global standards makes it necessary to revise and improve the educational process. The traditional learning model is changing as new needs emerge that were not previously relevant and new opportunities arise that were not available before.

WFME Global Standards for Quality Improvement in Medical Education (WFME 2007) for European countries emphasise that the mission and objectives of a medical education institution must include aspects such as social responsibility, research development, public involvement and preparation for continuing education. Communication skills and the ability to learn and develop professional qualifications throughout life are perceived as essential competencies for the success of the medical practice. The educational institution shall encourage students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Students must also be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning process and be prepared for independent lifelong learning. This means choosing appropriate teaching and learning methods and approaches based on modern adult learning theories. Principles, methods and practices for assessing students must promote learning and cover all areas, i.e., knowledge, skills, and values.

As the student contingent changes, new variables are introduced into the equations for the organisation of the educational process, such as the conflict between the generations, the specificity of blended learning, etc. To meet the needs of the new generation of students, teachers need not only to update their teaching material but also to rethink the way in which they present it, to redesign the study process, to look for more impactful, more student-engaging teaching methods and techniques, and to pay more attention to fostering the motivation of students. Tendencies of continuous activation of a person are not unique to education. Paradoxically, although the future labour market is increasingly technology-driven it is also extremely human-centred. The attractiveness of studies and the motivation of language learning are enhanced not only by the inclusion of new technologies in the study process but also by student-centred teaching, which is characterised by the student's autonomy, the setting of personal goals, the purposeful selection of learning environments and methods, as well as the ability to work in groups, with the counselling of a teacher (Weimer 2002; Bagdonas & Jankauskienė 2017). Student-centred learning is understood as a teacher's attitude to consciously pay more attention to students' needs and abilities and to empower learners - to give them more control over their own learning without lowering the standards of teaching. It is a promising and valuable alternative to traditional teaching, offering a flexible and interesting language learning paradigm (Kunkel 2002).

When discussing the motivation of non-humanities programme students to learn languages, it is often limited to the claim that motivation is directly related to the perceived practical value of the knowledge acquired. In this case, the obvious practical benefits of learning a foreign language should be sufficient incentive for the student to actively engage in the learning process and to seek to acquire the best possible communication skills in a given language. However, language teachers-practitioners often observe that students tend to put much more emphasis on course units in the field of their profession, while languages, as well as other course units not in the field of their profession, are of secondary or even tertiary importance.

An American educologist Sloan (2015) argues that if students' motivational needs are continuously stimulated and met, they will have a greater interest, enthusiasm, excitement and confidence in the course unit, which will lead to more productive, more persistent and more constant work. Therefore, if language teachers want their students to achieve maximum positive learning outcomes, they need to take at least part of the responsibility for increasing students' motivation and engagement in their studies.

A medical educational institution needs to be a dynamic institution whose renewal processes are based on research and analysis, and whose educational policies and practices need to be reviewed in accordance with past experiences, current activities and future prospects (WFME 2007). Thus, research in educational institutions, analysing the teaching process, the effectiveness of learning methods and the broader context of the institution are extremely important as they have to ensure the inclusion of new knowledge, concepts and methods as well as withdrawal of outdated methods.

The object of this paper is the data of the research carried out at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (hereinafter – LUHS) in 2013–2021 and their correlation with the educational experiment conducted in 2018 at Masaryk University (Brno, Czech Republic). The educational experiment was carried out and documented by S. Rakutienė, one of the co-authors of the article during ERASMUS+ teaching visit. The research was carried out to explore the attitudes of students and teachers towards the role of a teacher in organising the study process as well as the possibilities for communication and collaboration in language teaching and learning. The educational experiment aimed to determine how the level of foreign language proficiency affects students' ability to engage in the learning process, motivation to acquire new knowledge, activity during the activities and self-confidence in reflecting on learning activities and evaluating the teacher's work.

Research aim is to disclose the significance of students' motivation in the study process and to emphasise the importance of the role of a teacher in creating a positive learning environment and motivating students to engage in difficult but valuable language learning work.

Research objectives: 1. to discuss how the level of motivation affects the study process and learning outcomes, linking theoretical postulates with research insights; 2. to summarise the data obtained during the educational experiment and reveal their correlation with the results of the attitude research, paying attention to the issues of students' motivation to learn languages.

Research methods: quantitative research, educational development, statistical data analysis.

Characteristics of the research and educational experiment sample. Student attitude research was carried out in 2013–2014 at LUHS, Department of Languages and Education (Rakutienė et al. 2014). The study involved a homogeneous group of 97 randomly selected first- and second-year students of Veterinary Medicine study programme. The age of the research participants ranged from 18 to 28 years, and the average age of the research participants was 19-20 years.

The teachers attitude research (2016) involved 12 randomly selected teachers working at the Department of Languages and Education of the LUHS with 9 to 32 years of pedagogical work experience at the University (Janušaitienė et al. 2016).

The educational experiment was conducted in May 2018, at Masaryk University and it was mediated by the staff of the University's Language Centre. Two categories of randomly selected first-year dentistry students participated in the experiment: 1. experiment group – native Czech speakers who have studied a foreign language at general education schools. 2. control group – students from foreign countries studying dentistry at Masaryk University in the English language (12 persons). The average age of experiment participants – 19 years.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND STUDENT MOTIVATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Students are unequally involved in the learning process. The involvement of some is manifested only by external behaviour - good attendance in classes, the performance of specified assignments, and following the rules set by the teacher (behavioural engagement). Others demonstrate emotional engagement – they feel like they belong in the institution, have an interest in the learning activity and learning itself and respond openly, positively or negatively to various academic and social factors (emotional engagement). Students who demonstrate cognitive engagement in the learning process are enthusiastic about learning, do not avoid learning challenges, actively pursue their goals, and usually perform well (Nayir 2017).

Positive motivation helps people to achieve the goals, wants and needs that are important to them, and this leads to fulfilment, progress, responsibility, recognition and success. Strong motivation helps to form a clearer goal and to perceive the meaning of learning, which results in a better quality of studies, as a motivated person experiences the pleasure of learning, develops knowledge more efficiently and more actively engages in the studies (Abramauskienė & Kirliauskienė 2008; Vizgirdaitė 2013). The social context of the learning environment and the atmosphere of the contact group have a significant impact on students' learning motivation. The level of motivation can be determined by the individuals' engagement in the learning process, energy and effort they put into the various learning tasks. A motivated student becomes an active and equal participant in the learning process, he/she is not satisfied with automatic learning based solely on the acquisition of skills but devotes a lot of time to reflect on learning, realising the importance of this action in the learning process. Furthermore, students also easier absorb knowledge and consciously reconstruct and adapt it to their own needs and willingly engage in discussions and group problem-solving. A learning environment where students feel excluded does not motivate them to work hard, on the contrary, it discourages them and hinders their ability to perform well (Sloan 2015). The main learning goal of unmotivated students is not to acquire linguistic knowledge, not to be able to communicate well but to achieve a minimum score to pass the course unit exam.

Educologists Ryan and Deci (2000) claim that there are three psychological needs that form the basis of students' personal motivation to learn languages: the need to belong to a group, the need to perceive

one's own competence and the need for autonomy. This essential trio is only complemented by the attractiveness of learning activities and the perceived practical value of learning.

1. *The need to belong to a group.* The support of other members of the group, including the teacher as a very important member of the group, is extremely important to students. In order to achieve recognition and positive evaluation, students may engage in activities in which they have little personal interest and may put great effort to prove their worth to the group. This happens if a person's efforts to conform to the group's patterns and requirements are visible and if a person feels appreciated by the learning community for his/her contribution. If students do not feel an informal response, their motivation to learn decreases dramatically and productivity decreases.

In terms of students' psychological need to belong to a group and to receive a positive reaction from its members, the results of the LUHS students' attitude research revealed that the students want to see the teacher not only as a transmitter of knowledge, an organiser of the educational process and a reviewer of learning outcomes but also as a co-operative educator who encourages students' self-confidence, motivates and encourages them to enthusiastically undertake all the activities of their learning. The data presented in Figure 1 shows that the function of motivating students to learn is highly appreciated by the students as it is ranked as the second most important function of a teacher. Meanwhile, the research of teachers' attitude revealed that they tend to focus on the formal functions of a teacher (to teach, organise, evaluate) and in their opinion, students' motivation is only in the fourth place and the promotion of participation and self-esteem did not even exceed 4 points. Obviously, this attitude must be changed, especially in realising the impact of positive motivation on learning outcomes.

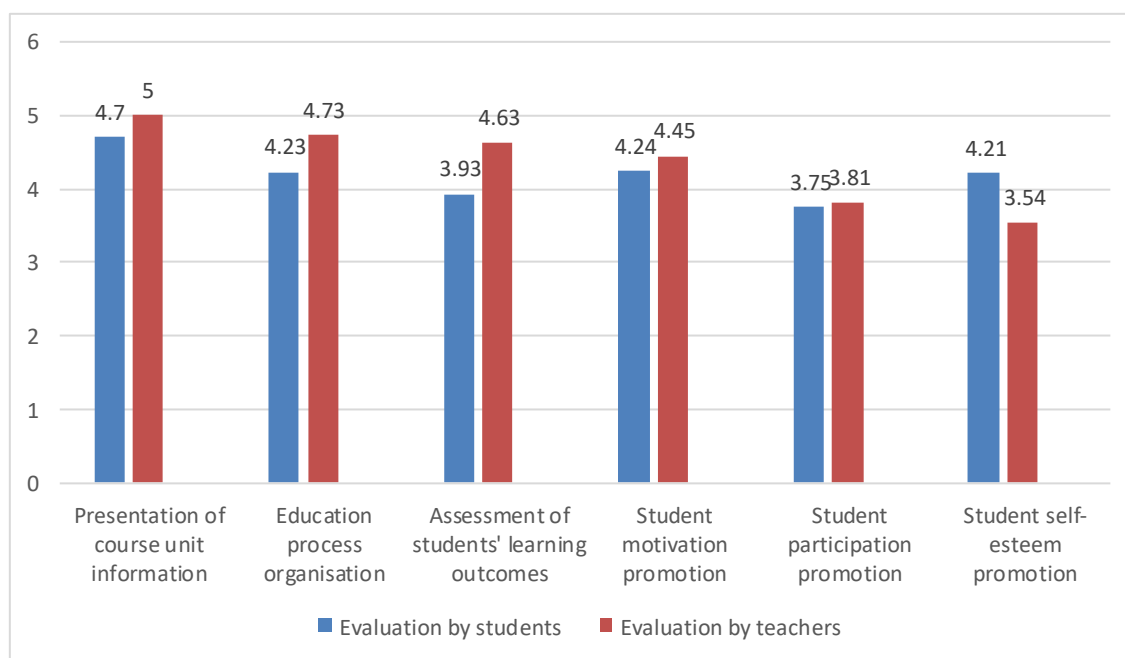


Fig. 1. The importance of teacher's functions from students and teachers' perspective.

According to the students, a teacher should create a friendly environment in the learning group as well as encourage communication and cooperation as then the members of the group set similar goals and objectives, work together to achieve the intended learning outcomes, and begin to appreciate each other's efforts to carry out the given assignments purposefully and effectively. On the other hand, students remind to consider the healthy competition. 86% of respondents agree that cooperation improves the final results of each activity but even 50% of respondents emphasise the importance of competition for personal development.

2-3. *The need to perceive one's own competence.* When students believe in their ability to engage in the learning process and to organise and perform the actions that will ultimately lead to desired outcomes, they are less afraid of possible mistakes and less vulnerable to temporary learning setbacks. This psychological need increases students' self-esteem and is closely related to the *need for autonomy*. The belief of others in a student's competence motivates him/her to meet the expectations placed on him/her and to demonstrate his/her ability to improve in the learning process. Extrinsic motivation encourages a student to take actions in the hope of a certain reward, namely, a verbal encouragement, a good grade or the establishment of one's ego. Over time, extrinsic motivation has a perspective of developing into intrinsic motivation based on interest, a sense of self-interest and a sense of pleasure in learning (Ryan & Deci 2000).

LUHS students have sufficient confidence in their ability to carry out educational assignments competently and independently. As many as 42% of students describe their communication and cooperation skills in language learning as being at Stage 3 of skill development (when new ways of activity performance are established, there is self-control and self-correction) and 47% of respondents believe to have reached Stage 4 (independent modification of actions according to the situation, easy correction of mistakes). 2% of students (only second-year students) say they are at the mastery stage (Stage 5) of communication skills. A teacher should enjoy such a strong sense of self-worth and self-confidence and should not deliberately undermine students' self-esteem in any way, because, as mentioned above, supporting and meeting students' psychological needs enhances their motivation to learn, fosters independence and helps them to achieve better results.

4. *Sense of value* (compatibility of usefulness and interest-zone). The practical value of the knowledge and skills acquired is determined by the extent to which this information is perceived as relevant and necessary for a person's future plans. A logical understanding of where in their professional life they will be able to use the skills they have acquired can significantly increase their motivation to learn. On the other hand, a lack of personal interest can reduce their motivation if the time and efforts put seem too high for a student compared to the perceived value. Schraw et al. (2001) suggest three general strategies for raising audience interest: (1) carefully selecting and well structuring learning material in order to maximise its relevance to students' professional interests, (2) offering students meaningful choices, and (3) providing or assisting students in gaining the contextual knowledge that will help them to understand the learning material. On the one hand, it can be argued that these strategies overemphasise a teacher's role in the organisation of learning, but on the other hand, they make the student feel important in the learning process, that his/her opinion is appreciated and needs are taken into account. Therefore, student-centred teaching creates a supportive learning environment and fosters parity relations that are necessary for an academic environment.

When investigating LUHS students' perception of the benefits of language learning, it was observed that the vast majority of students (96%) acknowledge the necessity of language learning, and only 4% of respondents stated that language learning should be kept only as an optional course unit and they justified their opinion with an argument of a lack of time.

Students identify many of the practical benefits of language learning, both abstract, related to the need for personal development, and specific, needed for the future career. The highest scores were given to the language skill opportunities to expand scientific ties (4.6) and to exchange new information and experience (4.5). The opportunity to develop new learning and research methods was given 4.34 points. This data makes an interesting contrast with the relatively lowest score given to the opportunity to establish professional contacts (4.26). It can be concluded that first-year and second-year students are highly engaged in the study and learning process and are less likely to think about their future careers. When talking about the opportunity to accumulate knowledge, there were divergent opinions among first-year and second-year students – first-year students rated it with only 4.15 points and this confirmed their previous view that language skills are more for general knowledge while second-year students rated this opportunity with 4.43 points and expressed their perception of the importance of language skills as a guarantee of professional knowledge accumulation.

Thus, it can be argued that the findings of the research support the theoretical postulates on the importance of motivation level in the study process. Students are aware of the importance of language

learning and, at the same time, clearly express and seek to meet their psychological needs. The majority of first-year and second-year students have a sufficient level of motivation, thus a teacher's task is to maintain and, if possible, increase that level.

THE IMPACT OF LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVEL ON STUDENTS' SELF-ESTEEM AND MOTIVATION TO LEARN: DATA ANALYSIS OF EDUCATIONAL EXPERIMENT

The substance of the educational experiment, carried out at Masaryk University, was the seek to confirm or deny the hypothesis that the level of foreign language proficiency has a strong impact not only on students' ability to acquire new knowledge but also on their motivation to learn, their engagement in learning activities and their self-esteem when reflecting the learning process.

The experiment consisted of two groups of students with different levels of English language proficiency: a) control group consisted of students from foreign countries whose level of foreign language proficiency (C – proficient) enabled them to study their desired profession in English without any major troubles; b) experiment group consisted of first-year Czech students studying in their native language who had studied English in general education schools and had reached (at most) the level of Independent User (B). Both Czech and foreign students study under an identical curriculum therefore it is assumed that during the time of the experiment they had the same amount of information and terminology knowledge.

Both groups participated separately in a medical Latin training exercise taught in the English language Latin Dental Terminology in Use: Formulation and Understanding of Clinical Diagnoses (2 academic hours each) where they were given identical learning material, identical practical activities and the same teaching methods. All assignments have been intentionally chosen obviously related to students' future careers, thus eliminating any possible doubts about the practical value of the material. During the exercises, students' reactions to the proposed activities were monitored as well as their activity and engagement in individual and group assignments. After the exercises, students were given an anonymous questionnaire (4 closed- and 2 open-ended questions) formally designed to evaluate a teacher's performance in the exercises. However, the main purpose of the questionnaire was to encourage students to reflect on the learning process and to help experiment initiators to confirm or to deny the proposed hypothesis.

First of all, students were asked to indicate which part of the material given during the exercises seemed new to them and they were offered possible answers. It should be emphasised that much of the teaching material was intentionally designed to repeat and systematise the students' prior knowledge. The control group's responses were evenly broken down at 50% - half of them said that less than a quarter of the material was new while the other half chose the answer that new information accounted for approximately 25–50% of the material. The responses of the experiment group broke down on a higher scale: even half of the group agreed that 25–50% of the material was new, and 35% of the group agreed that less than a quarter of the material was new. However, there were also 15% of the group who felt they received a lot of new information during the exercises - as much as 51–75% of the total learning material. The implication follows that the Czech students who had a poorer understanding of the language used by a teacher, had to divide their attention between English comprehension and the memorisation of Latin terminology and therefore they hardly felt the aspect of repetition and took more of the information as new material. Students from abroad who have reached a good level of language proficiency have been much more successful in meeting this challenge.

The second question asked students to score the quality of the teaching material, i.e. its novelty, attractiveness, and usefulness for their future profession and studies on a four-point scale from 0 (strongly disagree) to 3 (strongly agree) with 6 statements. At the same time, the aim was to encourage students to reflect on their own interests and engagement in learning activities during the exercises (data presented in Table 1).

No.	Statement	Evaluation							
		3 (foreign students)	3 (Czechs)	2 (foreign students)	2 (Czechs)	1 (foreign students)	1 (Czechs)	0 (foreign students)	0 (Czechs)
1.	I was interested almost throughout the entire time of the exercises.	83%	47%	17%	47%	0%	6%	0%	0%
2.	I think the exercises were helpful to me as a future professional.	50%	70%	50%	25%	0%	5%	0%	0%
3.	I repeated material already known to me.	50%	40%	50%	50%	0%	10%	0%	0%
4.	I received new information.	25%	70%	58%	25%	17%	5%	0%	0%
5.	The information I received helped me to systematise the knowledge I already had.	60%	65%	40%	25%	0%	10 %	0%	0%
6.	The information I received improved my existing skills in using medical Latin.	60%	50%	23%	40%	17%	10%	0%	0%

Table 1. Correlation between foreign and Czech students' ratings of statements.

The majority of international students strongly agreed with Statement 1 and confirmed their interest, while the remaining one-fifth of respondents scored it by 2 points. In the group of Czech students, the scoring points 3 and 2 between respondents split evenly in half and there was a small group (6%) of respondents who scored their interests only by 1 point.

The scoring points for Statement 2 in the control group split evenly between 3 and 2, while in the experiment group the majority of students strongly agreed with this Statement, a quarter of them agreed with Statement 2 and 5% agreed with Statement 1.

The aspect of active repetition (Statement 3) was noted by all participants in the control group, with respondents' scores again splitting evenly in half between 3 and 2. Czech respondents were not so sure: while the same number (half) scored the Statement with 2 points, as many as a fifth of the students hardly valued the repetition aspect, thus they scored the Statement with 1 point.

Considering that the exercises were designed to repeat the information they already had, the evaluation of Statement 4 is rather controversial. Only a quarter of international students evaluated the teaching material as new, a fifth said they had received little new information (scored with 1 point), and the remaining respondents scored the Statement with 2 points. Meanwhile, an absolute majority of Czechs said they had received a lot of new information and only 5% of respondents gave a score of 1 point.

Statements 5 and 6 were assessed very similarly by the control group respondents, with the majority of students (60%) strongly agreeing that the information they received helped them to systematise their existing knowledge and to improve their skills in the use of Latin medical terminology, and only a fifth doubting their improvement. In contrast, the responses of the experiment group varied more considerably: 65% were able to systematise their knowledge and 50% of respondents reported a significant improvement. 2 statements were scored respectively by 25% and 40% of respondents. 10%

of students reported that they did not notice (scoring point 1) any tendencies of the systematisation of knowledge or its development.

It should be noted that evaluating many of the statements, the responses of the control and experiment groups are inversely proportional to each other, which may be related to the level of foreign language proficiency. Czech students with a lower level of understanding of the English language spent less time interested in the learning assignments, some of them felt frustrated by the exaggerated effort to understand the teacher's language, and they were afraid of making mistakes and did not dare to actively engage in group work, ask questions or give answers. These factors could certainly have hindered the processes of knowledge acquisition and systematisation and impeded personal development.

However, students in both groups reported that they have noticed their own progress and plan to use their knowledge of Latin medical terminology in the future (data presented in Table 2).

No.	Statement:	Number of students and percentage	
		Foreign students	Czech students
1.	"... during the daily exercise of medical Latin."	6 resp. (50%)	20 resp. (50%)
2.	"carrying out independent assignments."	5 resp. (42%)	10 resp. (25%)
3.	"... preparing for a test/exam".	11 resp. (92%)	30 resp. (75%)
4.	"in my future studies."	4 resp. (34%)	24 resp. (60%)
5.	"... in my future professional career."	4 resp. (34%)	28 resp. (70%)
6.	"I do not think I will ever use these skills."	0 resp. (0%)	0 resp. (0%)

Table 2. Opportunities to use the acquired skills in the future.

It should be noted that the results of the educational experiment exactly correspond to the results of the LSMU student attitude survey: students from different countries, regardless of their upbringing, previous learning experiences, the characteristics of their current learning environment, or their cultural background, are the most focused on their studies in the first course. The majority of students plan to use their acquired and improved terminology skills in their studies and in preparing for exams. The answers to only 2 statements differ the most: students from foreign countries are twice as likely to mention the opportunity to use their knowledge to improve their independent work, while Czech students are twice as likely to use the acquired knowledge in their future professional careers.

The different learning experiences of foreign and Czech students are reflected in their answers to an open-ended question about the part of the exercise they found most useful. Only one-fifth of the control group answered that they found most of the exercises useful. Meanwhile, 60% of Czech students replied that everything was useful without exception. When asked to specify their answer, students demonstrated different levels of criticism towards the teacher (data presented in Table 3).

Observations from foreign students		Observations from Czech students	
Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
*Clear presentation of the formal aspects of terminology use (gender category, choice of endings...). * Improving skills in the correct use of Greek constructions and interpretation of terms. *Engaging learning activities, motivating students. *Element of repetition and systematisation.	* The break was not necessary. * Unnecessary repetition of some things. *Teacher spoke too loudly. *Too much attention was devoted to the motivation of students.	* Extremely useful term deconstruction exercises that help to understand and explain the meaning of terms. * The presentation of photos of real dental diseases was most interesting. * Apparent teacher's efforts to clarify things that were not entirely clear to students. * Emphasis on the potential use of acquired knowledge in practice. * Active cooperation between the teacher and students.	* Some exercises seemed too easy.

Table 3. Evaluation of teacher's performance during the exercises – positive and negative aspects.

It can be observed that foreign students are much more courageous in criticising teachers compared to Czechs, they evaluate the structure of the exercise, the relevance of the material, the teacher's interactions with students and even the teacher's manner of speech. Meanwhile, Czech students are much more careful with their criticism, they mention only objective nuance – the level of difficulty of the material. Although the average score for the teacher's work is rather similar (8.36 out of 10 from foreign students and 8.79 from Czech students), only 1 foreign student (8%) and even 12 Czech students (30%) gave the highest score (10) for the teacher's work.

Foreign students who are more confident in themselves and in their English language proficiency are more courageous in assessing the teacher's work, making comments and suggestions, and openly stating what could have been improved, and to which areas more or less attention could have been paid to. For example, after writing a 9 for good teaching the student does not hesitate to add a note for the future ("U were a bit loud ☺") or to praise the teacher ("She was very good at explaining, Useful hand-outs"), the student is not afraid to give 7 for teaching.

The Czech students also wanted to share more than just a mark, but there was only one written note; the student who scored the teacher's work with 9 points added a short comment ("Her speech was quite fast"). Other students, not confident in their English language skills and afraid of being misunderstood, used short phrases of gratitude ("Thanks") or even ideographic evaluation by drawing a heart, a raised thumb or an outstretched hand sign. Also at the end of the exercise, some of the Czech students, with the help of the Czech teachers, verbally expressed their gratitude and apologised for being less involved in the learning activities due to their poor proficiency in the English language.

Thus, summarising the data of the educational experiment, it can be stated that the hypothesis was confirmed - the level of proficiency in a foreign language has obviously a significant impact on students' motivation to learn, on their activity in engaging in learning activities and on their self-confidence in reflecting on the learning process as well as in the evaluating the performance of their own or of another member of the group (teacher) in the educational process.

CONCLUSIONS

The level of student motivation has a clear impact on both the study process and learning outcomes. A teacher has the power to increase students' motivation to learn, not only by emphasising the value of the material in the context of their studies and future careers but also by creating a positive learning environment, thus maximising students' basic psychological needs: to be a member of a group, to perceive one's own competence, and to feel autonomous.

The data from the survey on students' and teachers' attitudes showed that students are aware of their psychological needs, which determine their level of motivation for language learning. They feel the need to belong to a group and to receive a response from the members of that group (especially the teacher) for their efforts to participate in learning activities. When students are confident in their ability to handle the tasks, they tend to work actively and independently, with a teacher as a catalyst who not only provides information but also builds linguistic competence skills by constantly encouraging, motivating and activating students.

The results of the educational experiment confirmed that the level of proficiency in a foreign language strongly influences not only students' ability to obtain sufficient quality knowledge but also their ability to engage properly in the study process. It was proved that students with better foreign language skills are more confident in themselves and their abilities, they not only more actively participate in learning activities but are also more confident in reflecting on the learning process. Therefore, language proficiency can have a direct impact on the level of motivation of students to learn.

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