

EXPLORING STUDENT MOTIVATION: TEACHING STUDENTS SPECIALIZING IN EU ENGLISH

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Abstract: The present paper reports on a qualitative study involving a group of Hungarian university students learning the specialized language of the EU in English. The purpose of the study is to explore students' motivation to learn EU English and to see whether the results of the interviews analyzed could lead to an improvement of the course syllabus and the teaching materials. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with university students, as well as through two interviews with teachers, focusing on their students' motivational characteristics, and from the author's own teaching diary. Results show that identifying student motivation to learn EU English is a crucial step in designing syllabi or teaching materials for EU English courses, as it facilitates the definition of the actual course objectives and supplies teachers with useful information on their students' beliefs, wishes, and immediate and future goals. The results of the study are assumed to be of assistance to teachers of EU English courses in considering specific student needs when selecting relevant course content and compiling teaching materials.

Keywords: European Union, EU English, student motivation, English for Specific Purposes, course design

1 Introduction

The present study draws on research related to motivation and English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and explores students' motives to learn EU English, as well as issues in the development and improvement of teaching materials. The findings of this study can be relevant for teachers of EU English classes or for those designing the course material for their students. EU English courses are advertised in various institutions such as ministries, language schools and university language centres, for learners with different levels of English and educational or professional backgrounds (Fischer, 2009; Trebits, 2008). Nevertheless, the content of EU English courses is generally based on language teachers' intuitions rather than on a systematic analysis of student motivation, interests, expectations, aims or linguistic needs (Trebits, 2008). The present study focuses on learners in a tertiary context by exploring the motivation of EU English students in order to fill a gap in theoretical and practical implications of the EU English teaching and learning perspective. The research topic to be investigated covers multifarious fields of language pedagogy: it aims to examine student motivation in an EU English class where aspects of teaching and learning EU English are to be explored.

The following section therefore overviews the relevant literature, supplying the basis for formulating the research questions and developing the interview schedules. To the best of my knowledge, no research has been carried out on the motivational profiles of EU English language learners in the tertiary context. As the first stage of a larger project aiming to carry

out an in-depth analysis of the perceived, objective and target needs of students, and to analyze the views of teacher respondents on the learning motives of their students, this study is intended to create more awareness of the pedagogical aspects of EU English language teaching and course material design.

2 The theoretical background

In order to provide a complex theoretical background to the current research project, two main areas of the literature are discussed below. The section on EU English in the ESP context highlights research on the content and vehicle, i.e., the specific language area involved in the study, while the section on motivation discusses issues related to the students' disposition towards learning.

2.1 EU English in the ESP context

Recent research in the fields of translation, terminology and applied linguistics, exploring communication in EU institutions, acknowledges that the latest enlargement of the EU has strengthened the spread of English within the EU institutions (e.g., Pym, 2000; Truchot, 2002). The pedagogical need to teach English as it is used in the EU context in order to prepare not only translators, but also professionals who will join the EU's discourse community, is increasingly obvious in Hungarian higher education (Fischer, 2009). Moreover, recent Hungarian studies investigating EU terminology (e.g., Dróth, 2000; Fischer, 2007) and EU documents for pedagogical purposes (Jablonkai, 2009; Trebits, 2009) argue that EU English, a variety of English language used within the EU institutions, has developed into a language for specific purposes, one that is gaining more and more ground in higher education. As a result of varying student needs and course aims, teachers of EU English often face the challenge of having to design the syllabus of their own courses and sometimes of compiling the teaching materials themselves. In order to compile a successful course book, the specific objectives of such courses need to be established.

EU English has already been investigated through research on lexical features, conducted with the help of corpora of EU documents (Jablonkai, 2009; Trebits, 2009), issues in terminology (Fischer, 2006) and translation (Trosborg, 1997). Although the findings of translation and corpus-based research that have been conducted into the institutional language of the EU are influential in uncovering specialist lexical, grammatical and discoursal characteristics of EU English, these studies fail to investigate the actual learning environment where it would be possible to identify some of the ways in which motivational factors can be related to classroom techniques, as well as to curriculum and syllabus design (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991).

In the present study, EU English is referred to as a special variety of English language used in written and spoken communication within the EU institutions. Research already conducted on language use in the EU context primarily focused on translation and terminology issues (Dróth, 2000; Fischer, 2006, 2007; Károly, 2007; Klaudy, 2001) or discussed the language policy of the EU institutions (Gazzolla, 2006; Pym, 2000; Truchot, 2002; Tosi, 2003). Reference to pedagogical implications can be found in the study by López and Cañado (2001), who conducted a needs analysis survey in the European context. Their analysis aimed to identify the linguistic needs of a group of employees working at the European Commission. The investigation obtained data about the English language learning

needs of European professionals, paying attention to the learners' methodological preferences in the process of language learning. Another needs analysis questionnaire was constructed by Jablonkai (2009) to investigate Hungarian EU professionals (users of English EU documents, Hungarian EU professionals who use English EU documents for their jobs, lecturers in EU studies, teachers of English for the EU, and EU translators and interpreters). The aim of this questionnaire was to examine what types of EU documents and genres Hungarian professionals using EU English within the EU context most frequently dealt with and which of these types and genres they considered useful for future pedagogical purposes.

Pedagogical implications are also discussed in studies that focus on the lexis of EU documents (Jablonkai, 2009; Trebits, 2008) using corpus linguistics tools. One of the main aims of EU English corpus-based research is to reveal real language use in order to bring forth practical implications for EU English teaching and for the design of course materials. However, these studies fail to address certain aspects of language teaching and language use, such as learners' motives, perceived and objective needs, and language performance, which are essential components of discourse competence and consequently of communicative competence as a whole.

2.2 Motivation

2.2.1 A motivating classroom environment

Motivational teaching practice needs to be established in order to create an effective learning environment (Dörnyei, 2001). Creating such an environment involves three phases: (a) generating initial motivation; (b) maintaining and protecting motivation; and (c) encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation. Teachers are fortunate if they teach a class where all the students are equally highly motivated to learn a given subject; however, this is very often not the case. Teachers need to generate positive attitudes in the classroom if students lack initial motivation; one means of creating one such attitude towards learning can be a stock of relevant teaching material compiled for learners (Dörnyei, 2001). Another way of establishing and maintaining motivation for students is by giving them the opportunity to be more goal-oriented. In an average class, students do not always understand or accept why they are performing a particular learning activity, so it is the teacher's responsibility to set realistic and clear objectives and to ensure that the students understand them. Once the main aspects of creating initial student motivation have been identified, it is possible to generate or select a variety of specific classroom techniques to support particular dimensions of motivation.

2.2.2 The process model of L2 motivation

Recent motivational research directs the attention of researchers towards exploring the classroom milieu and the learning environment. It is widely accepted that motivation plays an essential role in academic learning in general, and this is particularly true of the sustained process of mastering an L2 (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005). Since the work of Canadian social psychologists Robert Gardner, Wallace Lambert, Richard Clément and their associates, who developed a motivational theory that focuses on language attitudinal variables using

standardized assessment instruments, research in the field of motivation has gone through a great deal of change (Dörnyei, 2001).

According to Shoaib and Dörnyei (2005), the 1990s broadened the perspectives in second language motivational research, combining educational research with the psychology of learning to investigate new motivational dimensions. Researchers argued that the classroom environment had a much stronger motivational impact than had been previously proposed, highlighting the significance of motives associated with the L2 course and teacher and learner groups. This situated approach drew attention to a formerly neglected aspect in research on motivation. Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) argued for a model of motivational theory which would acknowledge the fact that motivation is a dynamically evolving entity.

Dörnyei (2001) notes that until the early 1990s motivation was seen as a stable learner trait, and the 1990s extended this conception by viewing motivation as a more dynamic factor. Dörnyei and Ottó's 1998 process model of L2 motivation was the forerunner of a relatively neglected aspect of motivation that researchers started to draw attention to: the *dynamic character* and *temporal variation of motivation* (Shoaib & Dörnyei, 2005). This aspect of motivation is seen as a dynamic factor that represents continuous change. "Even during a single L2 course one can notice that language learning motivation shows a certain amount of changeability, and in the context of learning a language for several years, or over a lifetime, motivation is expected to go through very diverse phases" (Shoaib & Dörnyei, 2005, p. 23).

The most detailed process model of L2 motivation was developed by Dörnyei and Ottó (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998) and was set up to produce a systematic collection of motivational strategies and to synthesise earlier lines of research (e.g. Heckhausen and Kuhl's Theory of Action Control, see Heckhausen, 1991). The model identifies several separate temporal segments of the motivational process: the *preactional*, *actional* and *postactional* phases, and describes the motivational influences and action sequences of each stage; it shows how initial wishes and desires are transformed into goals and then into intentions, and how these intentions are pursued, leading to the achievement of a goal and/or to the termination of an action; the process is then concluded by a final evaluation (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998). Dörnyei underlines the importance of focusing on the temporal aspect of motivation because he believes that it allows researchers to discuss both *preactional choice motivation* (i.e., the motives leading to goal selection and to forming intentions) and volitional/executive factors during the *actional phase* (i.e., motives affecting ongoing learning behaviours) in a unified framework (Dörnyei, 2001).

2.2.3 The dimensions of the process model

The first dimension of the process model of L2 motivation is the *Action Sequence*, which represents the behavioural process of learners. According to Dörnyei and Ottó (1998), during the first, *preactional stage*, motivation needs to be generated. This initial phase is referred to as *choice motivation*, because the generated motivation leads to the selection of the goal or task that the individual will pursue. At the *actional stage*, the motivational construct described in the model is referred to as *executive motivation*, because the generated motivation needs to be maintained and protected as long as the particular action lasts. This is especially relevant to sustained activities, such as studying an L2, and to learning in classroom settings where students are exposed to a large number of influences. The *postactional stage* is called *motivational retrospection*, which concerns the retrospective

evaluation of learners. The way students process their past experiences in this retrospective phase will determine the kind of activities they will be motivated to pursue in the future (Shoaib & Dörnyei, 2005).

The second dimension of the model, *Motivational Influences*, includes motivational forces that underlie the behavioural process. In Dörnyei and Ottó's model, the different stages of the *Action Sequence* are influenced by several factors such as goal setting, intention formation, the initiation of intention enactment, and executive motivational and postactional evaluation.

As Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) point out, “[m]otivation is the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritised, operationalised, and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out” (p.64). In developing my interview guide on student motivation, I adopted this definition and considered motivation as a complex construct involving a number of influences such as subjective values and norms, the incentive value of goal-related actions, outcomes and consequences (instrumentality), the perceived potency of a potential goal, environmental stimuli, language/language-learning-related attitudes, relevance (personal- and setting-related), the degree of self-determination (type of regulation), goal properties, the availability of task opportunities and options, learner beliefs about L2 learning, knowledge of learning strategies, domain-specific knowledge, the quality of a learning experience, the perceived relationship between action and outcome, task presentation, classroom climate and language learning strategies.

To summarise, this study draws on the contemporary notions and aspects of motivation as mentioned earlier, and considers these aspects of motivation as a composite of concepts that play an influential role over the course of the study's development as a whole. By exploring students' motivation in an EU English class and analysing the views of teacher respondents on the learning motives and objectives of their students, this study hopes to create more awareness of the learning and teaching situation of EU English. Some aspects of the exploration of this particular language setting are expected to be of assistance to designers of materials for EU English.

The next sections of the paper are dedicated to the description of the research aims and research questions, the method of data collection and analysis, and, finally, the results of the interviews are shown, supplemented by data extracted from the diary I kept of my own classroom experience when teaching EU English.

3 Research aims and questions

The topic of this study covers two main areas: motivation and materials design (improving the EU English course material). The initial purpose of the research was to collect data on the motivational profiles of EU English students and to obtain their opinions on the teaching material in order to improve it. The main focus of the study – as an initial stage of the larger project – is on the motivation of students to learn EU English complemented by data gained from teacher interviews in order to explore whether the results could lead to the improvement of the teaching material of an EU English course in an EFL language teaching context at a Hungarian university.

An exploratory study of this type presupposes a qualitative approach. Considering the fact that the research study is thus qualitative in nature, research questions “may be formulated at the outset or later on, and may be refined or reformulated in the course of fieldwork” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 23). The present study is therefore guided by the following research questions:

- RQ1** What motivational profiles do students have in an EU English class?
- RQ2** How can the motivational profiles of EU English students contribute to improving the design of EU English learning materials?
- RQ3** How do students taking the course evaluate the available teaching material?

The next section presents the context of the study and describes the research method applied to the collection and analysis of the data.

4 The research method

4.1 Participants and setting

The present study was conducted at the Institute of Modern Languages of the Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME). The Institute launched an English language optional credit course called *The Language of the European Union* in 2009. The main objective of the course was to give university students a general overview of the history of the European Union and its institutional structure and policies, and to supply students with information about the use of English in the European Union. A course book in different languages (English, French, Italian, Spanish, German, Russian and Hungarian) was therefore designed by the teachers of the Institute. The main objective of the course material was to give university students the opportunity to learn about the specialist vocabulary and terminology used in the EU and to familiarize students with employment-related knowledge, to be used for both written and for oral communication in any field of life where EU language may be used. This instructional context provided appropriate conditions for a research plan where the prolonged engagement of the researcher and the purposive sampling of the study's participants were ensured.

The selection criteria of the participants were the following: they should be Hungarian university students who have chosen the *Language of the EU* course and have access to the course material. Another criterion was to choose participants with different majors and educational backgrounds, as it was felt that this could highlight various aspects of their motivation. For reasons of triangulation, colleagues teaching the same course, who were expected to give different insights into the topic, were interviewed.

4.2 Participants of the interviews

According to Dörnyei, qualitative research involves “data collection procedures that result primarily in open-ended, non-numerical data which is then analysed primarily by non-statistical methods” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 24). Thus, the best way to obtain such data is to conduct in-depth qualitative interviews, accompanied by classroom observation.

Interviews were conducted with ten students and two teachers of EU language courses. *Table 1* summarizes the relevant characteristics of the participants. The students' average age was 22. They attended different faculties of BME majoring in seven different subjects. They all described themselves as speakers of English at B2 level or above. The teachers both teach courses at the Institute, including *Language of the EU*, which they started to teach in 2009, developing the course material in French and in Spanish.

| Students and teachers | Age | Gender | Major | Language exam |
|------------------------------|------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Student 1 | 23 | Male | Mechanical Engineering | - |
| Student 2 | 20 | Female | Chemical Engineering | C1 |
| Student 3 | 23 | Male | Regional and environmental economics | C1 |
| Student 4 | 21 | Female | International management | - |
| Student 5 | 21 | Female | Architecture | C1 |
| Student 6 | 21 | Female | Chemical engineering | B2 |
| Student 7 | 21 | Female | Civil engineering | C1 |
| Student 8 | 23 | Female | Leadership and organisation | B2 |
| Student 9 | 22 | Female | Regional and environmental economics | B2 |
| Student 10 | 23 | Female | Civil engineering | B2 |
| Teacher 1 | 42 | Female | French | |
| Teacher 2 | 33 | Female | Spanish | |

Table 1. Participants of the interviews

4.3 The teacher-researcher- participant

I myself was another participant of the study as the teacher of the English version of the course; I taught and observed, as well as researched, students taking the EU classes. I interacted with my students, which allowed me to seek answers to my research questions in the original learning environment. Although participant research can be seen as subjective or biased, a participant-researcher position can, in my view, enrich the researcher's exploration in the field, which can be conducive to constructive methods of the research.

5 Instruments of data collection and methods of analysis

5.1 Student and teacher interviews

For the purposes of the present study, semi-structured interviews were conducted. Such interviews are considered

suitable for cases when the researcher has a good overview of the phenomenon or domain in question to develop broad questions about the topic in advance but does not want to use ready-made categories for responses so as not to limit the depth and breadth of the respondent's story. This format therefore needs an '*interview guide*' which has to be made and piloted in advance (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 120).

Considering the complex and dynamic nature of the term *motivation*, two interview schedules were developed in order to explore the motivational profiles of EU English students at BME. The interview schedules were based on Dörnyei and Ottó's (1998) process model and were designed to cover a wide range of topics concerning motivation in an EU English class and in relation to course material. My goal was to collect information about the students' level of English, the reason for their choice to participate in the course, their interests, their perception of the course and of the European Union, their previous knowledge about EU related issues, and their hopes, desires, wishes, as well as their immediate and future goals in connection with the course, with specialised EU language and with the course book.

One of the interview schedules was used to conduct interviews with teachers of EU courses in Spanish and French. At the time of the interviews, mine was the only English class, therefore no other English teacher could be involved. However, it seemed likely that the teachers of the other EU courses would contribute valuable insights, particularly since the syllabus they were following and their student population were similar to those in the English course. The second interview schedule was designed to interview students in my own class. Both interviews contained questions about the participants' personal background, general questions about their language knowledge, specific questions about their motivation in connection with EU language learning, and questions about course material.

In order to pilot the schedules, both a student interview and a teacher colleague interview were conducted. As a result of the piloting, some of the interview questions were reworded, dropped or extended. The interviews were conducted in Hungarian either in my office or in the classroom. Before starting the interviews with my students and my colleagues, I explained the aims of the interviews and the fact that anonymity would be ensured. The finalised interview schedule for students consisted of 31 questions, while the teacher interview schedule contained 22 questions. (English translations of the interview schedules for the students and teachers can be found in Appendix A and Appendix B respectively.)

5.2 Teacher's diary

In order to reveal the teacher's viewpoint, I also kept a diary throughout one semester, noting down my thoughts and comments on my laptop immediately after every lesson. These notes included general impressions on student motivation, on what types of activities or exercises students liked and disliked, and on what difficulties I encountered in the lesson.

6 Procedures of data analysis

The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The twelve interview transcripts yielded about 10,000 words of data; the length of the interviews was between 13 and 30 minutes. They were coded and analysed based on the constant comparative method of data analysis (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994), which involves a four-step procedure:

1. Inductive category coding and the simultaneous comparison of units of meaning across categories
2. Refinement of categories

3. Exploration of relationships and patterns across categories
4. Integration of data that yield an understanding of the people and setting being studied (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p.134)

The very first step of the analysis was rereading the data and becoming familiar with the ideas emerging from the transcripts. I first identified emerging themes and patterns by observing the recurring ideas. The most important emerging themes were the following:

- ***the learners' attitudes towards:*** learning English, learning the specialist language of the EU, and the EU
- ***the learners:*** the students' level of English, the students' hopes, desires, wishes, the students' efforts, the students' needs, and the students' immediate and future goals
- ***student interest:*** cultural, work-related issues, language related issues, and students' social environment
- ***student motivation:*** external influences, internal influences, and instrumental
- ***the role of the teacher:*** the teacher's personality, the role of the teaching material, and the positive and negative characteristics of the teaching material
- ***the role of the tasks:*** task presentation, lack of tasks, theoretical and practical knowledge
- ***the role of discourse analysis:*** written corpus, specialist vocabulary, and translation.

The emerging themes were reduced to the most important categories later in the course of the analysis, on the basis of their relevance to the research topic and questions.

7 Results and discussion

In this section, data gained from the research instruments will be presented in order to answer the research questions. Firstly, the results of the student interviews will be shown, then the teacher interviews will be discussed and, finally, data from the teacher's diary will be added to the results.

7.1 The students' beliefs, feelings and values

One of the categories established through the process of the analysis was *beliefs, feelings and values related to the process of learning EU English*. All the student respondents of the interviews associated some kind of belief, feeling or value related either to the European Union or to the usefulness of learning EU English for Specific Purposes.

The word 'possibility' characterizes the majority of the students' responses when they talked about the EU and the usefulness of its language. In most responses, ideas corresponding to the following samples can be observed:

An advantage in the EU for me is that it provides the possibility to study or work abroad. (S/1)¹

It is possible to travel and study...the EU enhances the cooperation and transparency among its members. (S/2)

¹ Quotations from the interviews have been translated from Hungarian and are identified by the numbers assigned to the students and teachers.

Other recurring expressions describing the students' beliefs and values relating to the EU English course are 'general education', 'communication abroad' and 'workplace expectations'.

I do not think I would like to work in the EU, but learning about it is part of one's general education and it is a bonus to learn it in English. (S/2)

The students think that nowadays it is essential to possess at least some basic knowledge about the EU, and this was one of their reasons for choosing the course. On the other hand, the motivation for their choice is not wholly different from the motivation of language students in general English classes: they want to practice English or they would like to maintain the level of language competence they had previously attained.

I have not thought of learning the language of the EU before. The truth is that I have chosen this course to learn English, but I was glad that the two were combined, so I can practice my English and learn something new at the same time. (S/5)

The students feel it is advantageous for them to participate in an EU English course because they hope the course will give them the possibility to communicate and it may help them to be more successful in a future workplace. However, before the course and at the beginning of it, it was not quite clear to them whether they knew the difference between learning general English and learning EU English for specific purposes. By no means all of them were aware of the specificity of the language to be learnt during the course.

It is good for me to learn EU English because without it I would not be able to communicate in Europe. It is a general expectation at workplaces today to contact foreign partners and to communicate with them. I would be excluded from a lot of opportunities if I did not work on my English. (S/3)

Student 1 explains why he believes it is useful for him to learn the language of the EU:

I think as we are one of the Member States of the EU and we do business with it and we are economically involved in the EU, we must be able to communicate with the foreigners and we might need it anywhere so it is very important to communicate with others. (S/1)

7.2 The students' motivational orientation

Another important provisional category I could identify, based on the emerging themes of the interviews, was the students' motivational orientation, which refers to what goals students wish to reach by studying EU English. The language learning goals of students are generally influenced by the social context in which they learn a language. Their motivation is also shaped by the values the society attributes to the knowledge of the particular language (Csizér, Kormos, & Sarkadi, 2010).

In the interviews, one can see how the immediate and future goals of the students overlap. The immediate goals relate to improving English language competence, obtaining

advanced level language examinations, enlarging vocabulary and getting to know the specialist terminology of the EU, widening knowledge of EU institutions and EU related topics. Talking about their aims, the students frequently start to talk about their future goals, which are mainly instrumental ones.

Well, [my goal is to learn] the specialist language of the EU and to be able to speak about EU related issues in English. I not only want to learn English, but I would also like to learn this English and about the whole EU, its institutions, what it does, what it did in the past, what kind of strategies it has, what goals the EU wants to achieve in the future; I would like to get to know this and I would like to learn about it in English. (S/4)

Future goals, as mentioned before, generally connect the knowledge to be acquired with future study plans and employment.

I would like to go to France and study there, maybe work there later. Though the French speak their own language, there are EU institutions in France where English can be used. I hope this language will be important in the future. (S/6)

In another quote *Student 3* mentions:

I think I will need it when I start to work or launch my own enterprise. (S/3)

While at the beginning of the interviews when the students were asked about their wishes, beliefs and desires concerning the usefulness of the course, they did not talk about instrumental goals or hopes, questions investigating their goals reveal some kind of modification compared to what emerged on the basis of the initial answers. As we proceeded with the questions, the students mentioned more explicitly that they would like to use the opportunity of learning EU English to enhance their employability.

7.3 Foreign students in the classroom

The last category I identified when analysing the students' responses was the learning environment/method of teaching/tasks/materials used in the classroom. When asked about the classroom learning environment, the students tended to mention that they enjoyed working in teams and were highly motivated by working together with foreign students, primarily the Erasmus students who were their classmates. The students felt that their foreign peers contributed to the good ambiance of the lessons, as well as to widening the scope of the course objectives.

It is always enjoyable when they [foreign students] make a presentation on how these things go on in their countries. (S/5)

I would be glad if there were more foreign students. I really like talking to them, though we do not always talk about EU English, but I think we can talk about a lot of very interesting things, and we are also obliged to speak English. (S/2)

The presence of international students in the class raises an interesting question from the point of view of materials design. The course material was originally compiled for

Hungarian students, including translation from English into Hungarian or vocabulary related tasks, which focus on English-Hungarian EU terminology. Therefore, some of the tasks or activities of the course book, including Hungarian words or translation, should be modified to make the class work more cohesively and to facilitate the teacher's task by not excluding foreign students from the mentioned activities.

7.4 Motivated by the teaching material?

The students generally told me straightforwardly what they liked and disliked in the book:

I think the book we are using is good, full of details and information. The smaller picture illustrations and anecdotes make it more interesting. It asks about our personal opinion and it motivates students. (S/1)

This response may not be the most unbiased one; the general picture of the students' likes and dislikes is somewhat less idyllic. The students frequently criticized the format, the length and the editing misprints of the book, whilst some of them even mentioned that the teaching material was too extensive compared to the length of the course. They missed illustrations and colours in the course book and some said that more glossaries of terms would have helped them to acquire the new vocabulary.

At first glance, the book looks unexciting, being black and white. I think it would be more motivating in colour and better formatting would also be needed. (S/1)

I would like to enlarge my vocabulary on the EU, I think more vocabulary-related tasks in the book would support this. (S/2)

As for the positive opinions, the students praised the topics covered by the book, especially in the units related to employment and studies abroad. They liked the fact that the book contained translation exercises and situations to be acted out in pairs or in groups. They particularly liked writing up the Europass CV and talking about EU job application forms.

7.5 And what do the teachers think?

The teacher interviews were conducted in order to shed light on the views of teachers who compiled teaching materials for EU classes. However, they teach other languages, namely French and Spanish. As explained earlier, interviews with teachers of other English classes could not be carried out, as I was the only teacher of EU English at the institute. However, the interview data gained from the teacher interviews presented here contain ideas that are either comparable to the views of students or complement them.

The two teachers who were interviewed had rather different ideas about the type of motivation which they believed influenced BME students to learn the specialist language of the EU. The teacher of the French class mainly identified future instrumental goals:

A lot of students come to this class because they want to get a scholarship abroad or they would like to find a job in Europe after graduation. There are many ambitious engineering or economics majors so I can very easily imagine that they will apply for a position abroad. (T/1)

The teacher of the Spanish class approached the issue rather from a linguistic perspective and above all emphasized the students' language learning aims that she noticed in her class.

In my view, what motivates them is to pick up a different type of vocabulary, or to learn the same thing about the EU that they may have learnt before but that is now a whole new vocabulary, whereas we, for instance, talk about legislation, or the institutions. They can learn the names of the institutions in Spanish, then they can compare them to the Hungarian counterparts... the same is true of topics such as education, environment, employment, etc. I think they primarily want to learn Spanish in this course. (T/2)

Speaking about the tasks and activities preferred by students, the teachers agreed with some of the students' preferences and added what they thought the students enjoyed in their classes and what, according to them, should additionally be taught. Furthermore, some ideas emerged about the desirable learning environment for an EU class.

They like being actively involved in class work. They also very much enjoy when they have to research something individually and make a presentation on a specific subject. They like browsing the Internet for particular pieces of information. (T/1)

I am lucky that the course takes place in the computer room. I prepare videos to be watched and listened to. When they made a presentation, they also included some kind of video too because they like to listen to real language use. Then we could discuss these videos and there were debates on them, so this is a kind of complex activity. I think what they really enjoy is speaking, not the reading or writing tasks. (T/2)

7.6 Teacher's diary

The diary I was systematically keeping after each class allowed me to complement the interview data with an insider's, observation-based view of student motivation, likes, dislikes and overall satisfaction with the course and the course material.

With regard to the teaching material, what I noted down is that it is too extensive compared to the length of the semester, which poses problems in the organisation and planning of lessons. The students favour the units of the course book that they think can serve their own immediate and future goals. These goals overlap and vary, as previous needs analysis and pilot interview results have shown.

The content of the diary underpins some of the findings of the interviews. Having taught three semesters of EU English, I have found that the students were especially motivated by work-, education- and communication-related topics and tasks. My diary also suggests that, in some way, the students struggle with the level of EU texts, partly due to their general intermediate level of English and the specialist vocabulary of the texts. However,

specialist vocabulary needs to be taught in an EU English class, and appropriate exercises need to be developed for this purpose. In my opinion, students are also greatly interested in the current events and changes taking place in the EU and feel strongly about the importance of Hungary playing an active role in the life of the EU; therefore, information on such topics could also be included in the book. Despite the wide range of activities and topics that would be important and useful, it should not be forgotten that the course lasts one semester and comprises only fourteen 90-minute lessons. This is a significant aspect of the course that should not be ignored if we intend to improve the supply of materials.

To summarise, the student and teacher interviews highlight some of the problems I have experienced, either with regard to the course content or to the course book. However, analysis of the interview data suggests that further investigation would be needed in order to establish of the students' objective language and communication needs in the envisaged target situations, thus creating a preliminary syllabus inventory that would contribute to a successful syllabus design and the improvement of the teaching material.

8 Conclusions and implications

The present paper aimed to uncover the motivational profiles that university students show in an EU English class at BME. Data was supplemented by teachers' experiences in EU language classes.

The results suggest that university students coming to an EU English course are motivated by feelings, beliefs and values, which are best described by the following terms: opportunities in the EU, possibilities of working and studying in the EU, obtaining general knowledge about the EU, communicating abroad and future workplace expectations towards employees. The students' immediate and future goals are interdependent. They participate in the EU English class to improve their language competence, and the *actional phase* of the learning process influences them to generate future instrumental ideas or objectives. One of the limitations of the study is that it has not examined the *postactional phase*, which could provide information and feedback on the motivational strategies of the students in the light of their course evaluation. The teacher interviews also indicate that the students are motivated by the opportunity to become more confident users of the language they learn, and at the same time they are motivated by current events and changes of the EU and have instrumental goals in an EU language class. The teacher's diary complements the findings and strengthens the opinions of the students and of the teachers.

Conducting interviews with students and asking them about the components of a course is an illuminating procedure for a teacher. Playing an active role in the research process by involving my own students has allowed me to understand how much careful preparation and previous knowledge are essential to building up the components of a newly introduced syllabus. The results of the interviews indicate that students taking an EU English class at BME think that some components of the course book should be changed to better motivate students and to meet their expectations of the teaching content.

Future directions of the research will include conducting a complex linguistic needs analysis before the course by means of a questionnaire on my students' knowledge of the EU and linguistic knowledge, developing assessment criterion of learners' achievement, a thorough document analysis of the teaching material based on the results of previously

conducted surveys, and conducting interviews with teacher-researcher informants of other higher education institutions to obtain a broader view of the issues explored. Further interviews or questionnaires addressed to particular representatives of the possible prospective employers of students are also planned steps in the exploration of the topic under investigation.

*Proofread for the use of English by: Christopher Ryan, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest and
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APPENDIX A**Student interview questions**
(English translation)**Personal background**

- Which university do you attend?
- What do you major in?
- Which year are you in?
- How old are you?

Information on English language competence

- How long have you been learning English?
- Have you passed a language examination?
- How do you judge your level of English?
- Do you speak any other languages?

Students' motivation in the EU class

- What does the EU mean to you?
- Is there a specialized language in the EU?
- Would you like to increase your knowledge about the EU?
- Why do you want to learn about it?
- Why is it good for you to learn the language of the EU?
- Before you learnt about this class, had you ever thought of taking a course on the specialist language of the EU?
- What do you expect from this class?
- Is learning the language of the EU a good opportunity for you? Why?
- Why did you choose this course?
- Do you have aims to be achieved by learning this subject?
- How determined are you to learn this language?
- Do you regularly prepare for classes?
- How much do you prepare?
- What efforts do you make to perform well in this class?
- Do you check the things you have not understood in class?
- How would you extend your knowledge about the EU outside this class?
- Does learning the language of the EU contribute to your future goals?
- Do you think this knowledge will help you in finding a good job in the future?

The teaching material

- What do you like in the course book?
- How does this book help you in learning the language of the EU?
- Do you ever read units in the book before we deal with them in class?
- Can you give examples of the negative characteristics of the book?
- What kind of tasks would you complement the book with?

Learning methods

- What do you like about how we learn in class?
- What kind of tasks and activities do you like doing?
- Is there anything you would like to add?

APPENDIX B**Teacher Interview Questions**
(English translation)**Personal background**

- Where do you teach?
- Which language do you teach?
- What other languages do you speak?
- How long have you been teaching?
- How old are you?

The specialist language of the EU

- Have you taught EU language before?
- Why is it useful to learn this language?
- Is there a specialist language in the EU?
If yes:
 - What defines the language variety of the EU?
 - What characteristics describe the [English, French, Spanish...] language use in the EU?
- What is important to teach relating to the EU?
- What is worth teaching in a specialized EU class?

Students

- What kind of language competence do students demonstrate in the class?
- Why do you think they choose this course?
- What motivates students to learn the language of the EU?
- What goals do students want to achieve by learning EU language?
- What themes are students most interested in?
- What type of tasks do students like?

The teaching material

- How would you evaluate the teaching material you use?
- What can be improved in the course book?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?