Teaching strategies in motivating global English learners: The Adaptive Relatability Motivation Framework

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English has undoubtedly become a global language. Within the last decades, however, societies and individuals have changed, became more complex, and identities, emotions and social spaces have been dramatically affected and re-negotiated by globalisation (Heyward, 2004; Tanu, 2016). This opinion article focuses on the author's researches and experiences in Central Asia and Eastern Europe as a teacher and lecturer. Based on her previous researches and observations the author offers a new framework that addresses students' needs and preferences for learning Global English. According to the Adaptive Relatability Motivation Framework, learners should be provided with culturally less invasive, identity-safe and emotionally more accommodating learning environment, where they can become more engaged, autonomous and adaptive in their own learning processes. Thus, learners will be able to continually relate their needs, social spaces and motivations to the successful use of the target language. The framework's concepts are summarized in four points that give a more pragmatic view on its use. These four points are further detailed, offering how these ideas can be implemented in an empirical fashion by educators and students.

Key words: ESL, motivation, learning autonomy, relatability, adaptability

1. Introduction

There are a large number of theories and new approaches in foreign language motivation that surface each year, most of them targeting the understanding of one very specific aspect of learning (Yuan, Li & Yu, 2018; Brevik & Rindal, 2020). These theories are meaningful on the academic level, as they are mostly descriptive and analytical, but in general offer little practical solutions for teachers and institutions on the macro and micro levels. It would be useful for teachers to follow the latest academic research in language education and try to implement it into the daily life of school and curricula. Nevertheless, most teachers have no time to do so and/or possess no skills to translate and implement the useful academic findings into empirical classroom practices (Komlosi-Ferdinand, 2019c, 2020a). Also, few educators have a clear understanding of the applicability of new research in their own country's socio-cultural context. Understandably, certain new findings and teaching methodologies will not necessarily result in some countries. Therefore, when presenting new educational strategies, they should be based on universal and adaptable principles, rather than rigid laws or dogmatic views on isolated factors. It is necessary to consider modern and real concepts that can be applied and modified according to empirical needs. In fact, both educators and learners must be able to relate to these strategies,

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as the contrary may result in emotional turmoil, emotional-cognitive insecurity and threat to learners' identity.

2. The background

This opinion essay is based on the author's ten years of experience teaching in international schools, boarding schools for gifted children and universities across Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Bulgaria. In all these countries, the author conducted researches and had experienced many challenges while teaching through the medium of English. These countries' educational background can be compared based on their historical legacies. In fact, none of them ever had English as a second language, nor they were ever invaded by English speaking powers. However, all of them were under Soviet rule at one point in history, thus making it possible to draw some conclusions about their English language teaching habits. Based on the researches and her observations, the researcher presents a framework here that summarises and organises the key educational issues that were most commonly present in those countries. The focus of the framework is to offer some key steps to create emotionally and culturally safe learning spaces, and to enhance language learning motivation among Global-English learners. Also, some practical suggestions are made on how to implement the framework with the goal of substituting empty, monotonous or depersonalized classroom practices with positive educational strategies that nurture autonomy and adaptability.

2.1 Adaptability and Relatability

It would be absolutely impossible to consider all variables across cultures, spaces and time that may affect the learning of a new language. Therefore, the focus of this article targets a specific new tribe, the global English learners/speakers, whose needs are addressed here. Global English could be defined as a variety of the English language that is spoken by non-native speakers in often international and intercultural settings, is free from colloquialisms that are particular to one specific country where English is the official and most dominant language (Crystal, 1995). The learners and speakers of global English often use the language as a tool for education, leisure and work, but have no specific intentions to relocate to an English speaking country and to adapt to its culture (Yuan, Li & Yu, 2018; Galloway & Numajiri, 2019; Xie, 2017).

The fact itself that this new tribe has emerged, points toward a rather sharp change in societies and in global dynamics (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). As new situations often need new understandings and approaches, fittingly, the concepts of *adaptability* and *relatability* emerge as the two key elements in learning English as a global language. Nowadays, the word relatability is mostly used in magazines, social media and blogs, but it is often avoided in academic studies. However, as social research in general aims to study real people, new trends and new realities should not be ignored, but included and taken as a serious factor. Another key term, adaptability, reflects both the intention of this framework – being adaptive to new needs- and cognitive and emotional adaptability, as a quality that both English learners and the industry that serves them should possess.

During the last decade, millions of lives became considerably more dynamic and therefore (often forcibly) adaptable, either pushed by changing workplace policies, by life circumstances or by own choice in almost every domain in life. To the extent never seen before,

an immense flow of information is seen, processed and connected by engaged minds. This flood of information is by no means a passive concept, but it is expected to be used dynamically in a variety of settings, which requires cognitive and sometimes physical adaptation. Unfortunately, learners of English are often ignorant about their own learning processes, preferences, motivations, and goals with emphasis on how to achieve them (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998, Komlosi-Ferdinand, 2019c). This may seem very counterproductive, as adaptation to new circumstances and new concepts should be done in a conscious way by individuals. This should encompass building their understanding and capacity in a purposeful way, instead of submitting their intellect in a non-linear fashion to every surfacing trend and to morally or culturally non-acceptable perceived requirements. Conflicts may surface in early scenarios of learning English at schools, language schools or even at higher levels, where most learners have no real understanding regarding when and how to use their new knowledge, or even how to use it properly in a variety of circumstances (Komlosi-Ferdinand, 2021). In fact, it is very hard and cognitively dissonant to adapt to possible circumstances and scenarios to which the learners cannot relate at all.

Unfortunately, in most English learning classrooms, learners are often unable to relate to the English language and its teaching processes, either because of the very unrelatable design of the textbooks, or because educators themselves are biased towards certain aspect of effective language learning, ignoring the psychological aspects of it (Bromeley, Hua & Jandar, 2019). Needless to say that if the learner is told from the beginning to 'learn English to have a good future' is not a negative concept. While this sentence is the much promising motto of most institutions where learning English as a foreign language takes place, yet, it may simply not be relatable to learners. Actually, learning English for a better future sounds such a wide range of vague possibility that it is hard to establish a realistic and sustainable motivational factor. Therefore, the learner is moving towards a possibly meaningful, yet, unknown destination. For global English learners, depending on their culture, gender and identity, specific training strategies are needed to ensure their understanding of their dynamically changing goals, motivations, sometimes the lack of it, and how to adapt to these changes. In fact, learners should be made aware of that despite such fluctuations, the learning process should not be abandoned, but upgraded to a more relatable one, which will lead to continuous engagement and cumulative motivation, where they can relate to new circumstances and how to use English in them.

2.2 The compound nature of language learning psychology – some previous studies

It is worth mentioning some quite recent theories that put second language learning motivation in a new light. In 1997, Larsen-Freeman had already used the ideas *chaos* and *complexity* referring to motivation in psychology, giving an obvious hint that motivation is definitely not a simple and linear concept. This was further developed by Mercer (2011), naming it Complexity, Continuity and Change, a theory which further explained and expanded academic understanding on the subject. In 2014, Waninge, Dörnyei and De Bot's article on dynamics in language learning, have reaffirmed a key concept that motivation is dynamic. The importance of these ideas lies in the fact that they attempted (with plausible success) to eliminate rigidity in understanding and researching motivation altogether. Al-Hoorie (2016) also offered some interesting insights on unconscious motivation, and how the learners' relationship to their L1

may bias their attitudes towards learning and using L2, mostly as a result of a threat to cultural identity.

The new framework the author presents here is very much in line with recent developments, although it is not based on them. While these previous theories are significant and relevant, there is a gap within these new developments in one very specific way. As the titles of the previous theories suggest, dynamicity, complexity and – to a certain extent – chaos were investigated as a continuum of new trends in motivation. While they are very accurate descriptions, the implementation of these ideas, where they are most empirically needed, in foreign language learning, are somewhat complicated. It is not difficult to picture the reaction of any teacher or learner, who are told that their motivation is complex, dynamic and somewhat chaotic. Although this may very well be the case, probably the reality should be presented in a more psychologically affordable fashion: Individuals should adapt and/or develop their motivation in a way that can be *relatable to their present or foreseeable circumstances*. This concept is both easily understandable, teachable and may help individuals to analyse and organise their learning circumstances and motivation.

3. Adaptive Relatability Motivation (ARM) Framework

Building a bridge between the academic research community and educators' and learners' real empirical needs is vital. Theories on foreign language motivation and new frameworks developed by academics should be of service to the target community. While there is no advocacy whatsoever for over-simplification of complex ideas, there is a desperate demand for making them empirically applicable in learning scenarios. This need is well reflected in Bourdieu's words (1996, p. 7) stating: "As I never accepted distinction between theory and methodology, conceptual analysis and empirical description, the theoretical model does not appear there embellished with all the marks by which one usually recognizes 'grand theory' (such as lack of reference to some empirical reality)."

The new Adaptive Relatability Motivation (ARM) framework presented here aims to be practical and uncomplicated to adapt to everyday classroom needs. In the framework, the columns describe the 1) factors to be validated; 2) the educational strategies; 3) the consequent benefits and the 4) outcome. Nevertheless, the framework is not to be interpreted strictly horizontally. Hence, although, all factors from all columns should be present in order to achieve success, by no means one specific horizontal line of sequence should be forced to be implemented without considering the overall objective of the framework. While the framework is primarily developed based on researches and experiences lived in Central Asia and Eastern Europe, its principles could be adapted in other countries as well. In fact, the ARM framework is designed in order to be used sensitively, considering learners' culture, language and religion, and according the institutions' or individuals' possibilities and relatability. Therefore, the framework's adaptability ensures its applicability and relatability in many different cultures.

Factors to be validated		Educational Strategies		Benefits		Outcome
Cultural identity		Focus on L2 usefulness		Multidimensional motivation		
Gender-related aims and behaviours		Helping students to understand their learning style preferences		Reduced identity crisis (or loss of fear to being forced into a new one)		Adaptive relatability to L2 that motivates continuous engagement in its learning process
Current motivation	+	Teaching practices that promote autonomous learners	→	Perception of L2 as a positive force for personal, professional and societal growth and/or cultural literacy	=	
Emotions in the classroom		Teaching L2 related EQ		Becoming proficient and a really emotionally intelligent foreign language speaker		

Figure 1. Framework of Adaptive Relatability Motivation (ARM) in L2 Learning

4. Empirical strategies to use the ARM framework

In this section, the author offers four recommendations that summarize the concepts presented in the ARM framework. Also, suggestions are provided on how to implement and design culturally, individually and/or mission-related strategies that enhance learning success and enjoyment in a variety of learning contexts:

- **Eliminating teacher likeability bias and classroom dependent learning:** Shifting towards the promotion of cognitive and emotional independence from the teacher and focusing on individual learning style preferences in the path of developing learning autonomy.
- **Validating emotions, teaching through culture-appropriate strategies and emphasizing foreign language related emotional intelligence:** Helping students to understand and foster their identity, validating their emotions and motivation, while teaching cultural and pragmatic sensitivity of the manifestations of the English language.
- **Respecting gender groups' needs in the ESL classroom:** designing classroom strategies and learning content that genders can identify with without embarrassment.
- **Adaptability and Relatability:** Balancing needs, preferences and reality for continuous engagement.

5. Eliminating teacher likeability bias and classroom dependent learning

The first point focuses on preventing and eliminating both teacher likeability bias and classroom-dependent learning. In foreign language education, emotions and learning are very intertwined (Op't Eynde, De Corte & Verschaffel, 2007; Pekrun, Goetz, Titz & Perry, 2002; Saito, Dewaele, Abe & In'nami, 2018). In fact, classroom emotions and preferences towards teachers are sometimes based on previous life experiences, being very difficult to alter (Oxford, 1993; Hill, 2018). By no means, the goal is to emotionally re-programme learners, but to empower them to see the practical content of the lessons and to try to focus all their cognitive resources on the learning goal, not necessarily on the channel through which it is delivered (Reinders, 2010; Komlosi-Ferdinand, 2019c). This should be true for educators who are perceived unlikeable and/or very likeable as well. In the case of teachers that are perceived as likeable, there are equal benefits to focus on their lessons instead of their personality mostly. While it is a greatly rewarding experience to have an engaging, positive and caring teacher, the desired outcome of any learning scenario is eventually knowledge acquisition in an appropriate, accommodating context, not enjoying a show (Karimi & Nikbakht, 2019).

5.1 The role of management

Nowadays, many educators are expected to be not only professional, but highly entertaining. This fact is heavily reinforced across universities, private schools and language schools in particular. The fact that students can and often are obliged to give reports about the teachers to the administration, positions teachers in a vulnerable situation, forcing them to act in the classroom in ways that not necessarily nurtures knowledge acquisition and learning autonomy. There is much daily pressure on the teachers to be overly and unduly apologetic and forcibly entertaining. At this point, unfortunately, there is another factor to consider. Foreign language education in private and language schools is inseparably linked to high monetary benefits. Therefore, English language educators are required to be both highly charismatic and educators of the highest quality if they want to continue being employed. However, more institutions should aim for the excellence of education, where the focus is on knowledge and learning-autonomy (Holec, 1981; Benson, 2011). Accordingly, teachers should embrace classroom practices that are centred on learning, and emotionally caring for students *in that context*, instead of trying to win learners' good intentions and blessing by keeping them amused in the classroom. To achieve this, a seemingly contradictory strategy is needed: to focus on the learner. This focus should not target learners' boredom or wish for having a cheerful and easy time in the classroom, but to teach them their learning strengths and how they can become autonomous in their studying processes (Nakata, 2014).

5.2 From homework to relatable short projects

Teaching learner-autonomy should always be a priority in all classrooms, as learners from all backgrounds are capable of developing and mastering it (Cohen, 2004; Nakata, 2014; Chaffee, Lou, Noels & Katz, 2019; Sakai, Takagi & Chu, 2010). By this practice, learners could develop emotional stability in their learning processes, while having cognitive reassurance and care by the teachers (Martin, 2004; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2011). As every classroom based learning

scenario is time limited, assignments that can be executed at home are a great tool to develop such learner-autonomy. I propose the modification of homework in its traditionally used form. The conventional concept of homework, besides being an outdated idea, has become a psychological threat to many learners, particularly in its meaningless, repetitive form (Kralovec &Buell, 2000; Kohn, 2006; Bennet & Kalish, 2006; Bomarito, 2017). As the ARM framework suggests, relatability – besides capacity – is the key. Therefore, learners should have short *challenges* that allow them to work on personalised short projects at home (Redding, 2000; Epstein & Van Voorish, 2001). This should encompass the selection of the proper vocabulary and structure in a topic that they can relate to, within a frame given by the educator. For example, if the topic is 'health' learners should be encouraged to choose any viewpoint or story they wish and elaborate it creatively. Relatability here is vital, as some learners may lose interest on elaborating a project on the benefits of eating a number of vegetables each day. Instead, based on individual interest, some may research about the newest discovery in cancer treatment, while others may be investigating the effects of body building, etc. The same approach would be very beneficial with assessments. Learners should be given authority to develop their own tests by developing properly structured essays or question and answer formal tests. This flexibility and adaptability showed by the institution would also allow learners to feel more comfortable about assessment in general. Such practices would also encourage students, as they would not be compared against other students, but would see the effectiveness of their own strategies, resulting in more learning autonomy and motivation (Xu, 2008a, 2008b; Bembenutty, 2011).

5.3 Promoting autonomy: the importance of teachers' guidance

The above discussed strategies should help greatly both teachers and students to have a clear understanding of the boundaries and aim of the physical or virtual classroom itself. On the one hand, teachers should design their curricula and syllabi to be individual-centred, as opposed to a focus on the teachers' skills reduced to the classroom as well as heavily monitored and supervised activities (Felder & Henriques, 1995). On the other hand, learners should be constantly encouraged to expand their English language knowledge further in relatable domains. This, in most of the cases, needs some direction as well. While most teachers have it consciously or unconsciously clear how learners could/should benefit from using English outside the classroom, surprisingly few educators teach/discuss it (Xie, 2017). Such things should never be given for granted, but rather, by providing ideas and guidelines teachers should try to inspire students.

In fact, metacognition and how to develop learning autonomy could be good topics of common brainstorming, where learners may relate to some ideas and later develop their own line of interests and motivations. Arousing learners' curiosity may also help them to see opportunities to use English in fields they never considered before. Motivation to learn English should not be understood as finishing the exercises set by the teacher and sitting still during the lesson. Teachers should help learners to see beyond classroom-bound motivation and how to take practical steps to achieve their goals. However, to embrace such strategies requires much effort from both learners and educators, as giving up long-standing classroom practices may be socially, cognitively, emotionally and psychologically very demanding. The properly understood and locally acceptable use of positive psychology may be a great tool to achieve

such outcomes and may help to broaden the comfort zone of individuals with secure steps (Komlosi-Ferdinand, 2020b).

6. Validating emotions, teaching through culture-appropriate strategies and emphasizing foreign language related emotional intelligence

Validating emotions in the classroom is a challenging strategy. In many cultures the student-teacher power dynamics vary, are often rigid, and hierarchy is unalterable. Therefore, validating, or even accepting the emotions of the learners may present a challenge (Bada & Okan, 2000; Xiao, 2006). While this is particularly true for local teachers with local students, the scenario where foreign teachers teach local students may provoke considerable confusion. Nevertheless, every human being has emotions, thus, they can be validated in different ways. The focus of this strategy mostly lies in validating negative emotions which surface while learning a foreign language. Excluding assessments, among the biggest anxiety and discomfort inducing realities learners encounter is balancing their own cultural, moral and religious values, which may not necessarily coincide with countries where English is spoken (Fearon, 1999). In such cases, local and foreign teachers should consider adopting slightly different, yet converging strategies.

6.1 The role of local teachers

As for local teachers, there is an urging need to resist 'localizing' the English language. To a certain degree, it is understandable when local teachers approach the first lessons in teaching English from the local perspective, so the language is presented in an intelligible and relatable way to the learners. However, to continue such strategies as if English should be understood and spoken from the local perspective will confuse learners and will lead to failure when communicating with foreigners.

Local educators do well to preserve and nurture local students' own cultural identity, without drawing unnecessary nationalistic and/or political parallels between the local culture and English as a language and a culture they attach to them (Heyward, 2004). Emotional validation must always be implemented with focus of personal and cognitive growth, to which English is not a threat, but an added value to the individuals' existing competencies. Maintaining the autonomies of both the local language and culture and the English language, should result convergent and positive attitudes that recognise the worth and place of both entities.

6.2 The role of foreign teachers

Unfortunately, some foreign teachers, hopefully unwittingly, tend to show colonising behaviours and treat local students as expatriates (Cohen, 2004). Whenever this attitude is present, it often reflects a real shock for foreigners, when learners do not meet their standards. In fact, learners are often unable to respond as swiftly and correctly as expected during the lessons. Moreover, many learners of English are not able to fully understand foreign mentality and English related emotional intelligence. For these students, the speech of the foreign teachers is often not fully intelligible, as they understand most of the words, but not the connotations of

their speech or the pragmatics. Foreign teachers need to be aware that, even if learners are able to make more or less complex sentences, or even fluently communicate in English, it does not automatically result in having all the cultural and English-related emotional intelligence body of knowledge that foreign teachers possess (Komlosi-Ferdinand, 2019b).

6.3 Emotional validation according the learners' culture

Learners being able to express themselves to a certain degree, does not signify that they understand the other speakers' intended message clearly (Zarezadeh, 2013; Spirovska-Tevdovska, 2017). These concepts must be introduced, clarified and taught without taboos, but in a culture and age sensitive fashion. In failing to do so, communication fails and the lack of understanding of behavioural clues may seriously compromise learners' motivation or even self-esteem (Schmidt, Boraie & Kassabgy, 1996; Mehrdad & Ahghar, 2013). Emotional validation, however, can make a real difference in such cases. Western teachers are often more acquainted with the idea of positive psychology, and use it according to their own understanding. Being positive is a good quality without reservation. However, the concept of emotional validation should be clarified. Foreigners should thoroughly research the local culture, and get acquainted with locally acceptable forms of education, societal expectations and management of emotions in and out of the classroom (Parkinson & Dinsmore, 2019). For example, if a foreign teacher is always overly cheerful in the classroom, that may not necessarily suggest positivity to the learners depending on their culture or the context. In fact, according to the cultures found in Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan, displaying overtly positive and emotional attitudes equates to simple-mindedness. It needs to be emphasized here that *understanding* the other culture's values *is not* necessarily the key point, but *accepting* it and *respecting* it will result in a positive learning environment.

The approach proposed here allows time for learners to feel safe, without unnecessary criticism, or visible surprise and disapproval for their low language skills. They are not English speakers with low mental capacity, but individuals with a different language(s), culture and world-view. Accepting this difference is a very effective form of emotional validation. Another positive strategy is showing respect for, and gaining some understanding about learners' cultures in both explicit and implicit fashions. For example, "This behaviour may be acceptable with your Bulgarian teacher, but not in my class!" may undermine learners' self-worth and may incite nationalistic feelings. However, such a strategy probably won't make them understand how their attitudes and behaviours are unacceptable. Instead, while reassuring learners about their good intentions, the different requirements and standards of the foreign teachers should be made absolutely clear. It cannot be accentuated enough how important details are. Foreign teachers should never assume learners understand correctly all the pragmatic, cultural and behavioural implications of a foreign language. Even if learners believe they do so, this is most often their perception, not the reality. Thus, cultural sensibility in the classroom is vital, as learners from a variety of cultures may be particularly vulnerable to foreign teachers (McKinley, 2007).

Furthermore, foreigners may emotionally validate learners by not openly discussing their weaknesses publicly. For example, learners in Asia may feel extremely humiliated if asked by the teacher in front of the class what do they find difficult. To them, this would be considered an irreparable loss of face and they probably wouldn't give an honest answer regarding their

learning struggles. To a lesser extent, this phenomenon might be true in Eastern Europe as well, particularly among male learners. The strategy I recommend here is uncomplicated and effective. Simple pieces of papers should be anonymously thrown in a box at the end of each lesson with an actual difficult point written on them. Then these ideas should be written on the board and learners asked to make a short investigation about a particular point at home. Linking learning-autonomy and emotional validation can be very beneficial. By sharing their findings, learners can feel empowered, and other students may relate more to their conclusions than they would to the teachers' explanation. In a later lesson, before moving on to more difficult levels without a solid foundation, the content of these presentations should be discussed without the necessity of finding out who has experienced a particular difficulty. If there is still a need for a teacher to intervene, or provide an additional explanation, such interventions should be sensitively expressed. Thus, acknowledging the difficulty of learning a foreign language, honouring learners' dignity and emotions, and helping with practical steps, is a greatly validating and motivating experience that will create a real positive and caring atmosphere (Oga-Baldwin, 2019; Oxford, 1993; Swain, 2013; Parkinson & Dinsmore, 2019).

6.4 Teaching emotional intelligence (EQ)

Emotional intelligence is defined as the capacity to perceive, understand and conscientiously demonstrate emotions and to use this knowledge for further emotional development (Brackett, Mayer & Warner, 2004). As English has become a global language and many learners and speakers have no intentions to relocate and to adapt to a specific English speaking country, the cultural and pragmatic components of teaching and speaking English have become a complicated issue during the learning process. However, those learners who wish to use English as a simple tool still need to be aware of its specific and internationally acceptable communication strategies.

For example, if in an international business setting participants from a variety of continents, countries or territories needed to have fluent communication in English, it would be impossible for all of them to use the English language mixed with their own culturally acceptable behaviours and communication styles. In the case of global English learners in particular, it would be very confusing to focus on the USA or UK related variant, as those cultures do not cover the general understanding and relatability of English learners and/or speakers. Global English language-related EQ, therefore, has to focus on some specific psychological, kinesiological and pragmatic application of the language, instead of culture-specific ones. This concept greatly facilitates successful communication among individuals and groups. Moreover, it would not be perceived as being culturally invasive towards the foreign speaker in international settings. In fact, the lack of global English-specific EQ could provoke an erroneously structured intellectual and moral hierarchy among the different speakers and could be perceived as a threat towards their own cultural and ethnic identity. Learning global English related EQ may greatly contribute to learners' motivation and may enhance their understanding of the complex nature of a language, allowing them to communicate with ease in settings that differ from their own culture (Brackett, Mayer & Warner, 2004).

Both local and foreign teachers have the duty to teach a range of English-related emotional intelligence concepts and skills to the learners (Valiente, Swanson & Eisenberg, 2012). As an example, proper use and mirroring of body language (Tipper, Signorini & Grafton,

2015) can be crucial when expressing respect for other individuals. Basic skills, such as appropriate forms of greetings, polite information request, clarification of possible communication differences, understanding of social/professional hierarchy related cultural differences and respecting the concept of personal space should be taught explicitly. Otherwise, mistaken actions may have unfortunate consequences, and the other party may feel uneasy or even offended (Barkai, 1990). The use of short educational videos and the clear, detailed, yet simple explanations of certain culture-embedded behaviours may help learners to learn specific behavioural rules that will lead to successful communication. However, when using such visual material or demonstrations it should be avoided to identify certain behaviours as 'right' or 'wrong'. To clarify existing foreign culture or language based differences, educators should draw attention on 'this is how people do in other countries'. By this, students' own cultural preparedness will be acknowledged and validated, yet, they will understand that other ways are acceptable and needed in other cultural and linguistic contexts (Gershon & Pellitteri, 2018). Moreover, a strong and positive collaboration between local and foreign teachers will serve as an excellent role model for children to perceive both sides' worth, and how these sides can complement each other without harming learner's cultural identity.

6.5 Understanding non-verbal clues and the need for being specific

Another key concept to teach is understanding non-verbal clues, which is probably the most difficult task when communicating in a foreign language. In fact, it is critical to teach how emotions and implied behaviours are expressed in other cultures (Sparrow & Knight, 2006; Sándorová, 2016; Mahboob, 2018). The teaching of expressions and interpretation of emotions should gradually encompass complex ideas, not only the basic ones. Learners eventually should understand the difference between the other party being sad, or possibly disapproving and retreating from the interaction altogether because of the learner's perceived inappropriate behaviour. As Maclellan (2013, p. 2) points out: "Our capacity for reflexive thought means that we are able to think about how others see us and who we are... This consciousness of our own identity - our self - is possibly our most important possession". However, sometimes it can be very difficult to discern non-verbal clues. For example, in a scenario, where non-verbal clues are not understood, individuals often simply do not react anyhow. This is quite natural, as they may be trying to guess the other party's intentions, but not necessarily with much success. To avoid such uncomfortable situations, learners should be taught to ask for polite clarification. If such request is properly done, the discomfort can be eased and even a certain measure of bonding may take place.

Another crucial factor I recommend considering is the need to be specific. The fact of being specific in opinions and requests may seem somewhat a personal trait to many, but in this case it will be generalised to individualistic as opposed to collectivistic cultures (Gudykunst, et al., 1996). As many Western cultures are regarded as individualistic and many Asian cultures collectivistic, being specific in communication may have an entirely different meaning and may easily lead to misunderstandings. In fact, in some collectivistic cultures, non-verbal clues are more often used to express preferences, rather than expressing it verbally and specifically. However, the same strategies may not work well in in English, and the expected outcome of the learner's communication goal may be entirely lost. This could be illustrated with the use of the word 'no'. While certain cultures mostly avoid using this word (or even have no word for it),

other cultures will use it freely, without any reservation. These practices are heavily embedded in the speakers' original culture. For example, Russian speakers of English will extensively use 'no' in their speech, while Japanese speakers will avoid it as much as they can. Another example is the extensive and improper use of the word 'maybe'. It is often seen with Asian students to answer yes or no questions with maybe, or attaching maybe at the end or sentences where doubt should not be expressed at all. While this may sound amusing in the beginning, this phenomenon should be balanced by teaching and reminding the proper use of such words in the foreign language classroom. Therefore, as can be seen here, there is a possible pitfall of not being specific enough, and the other speaker may not be able to understand our non-verbal clues. Hence, it is crucial to teach learners about when and how being specific is acceptable and expected when speaking English.

6.6 Teachers' struggles to teach English-related EQ

The implementation of the aforementioned ideas from the perspective of local teachers who may have never travelled to English speaking countries themselves, may result to be a very difficult task. Local teachers often do not access teaching-psychology training during their university years at all. If they travelled/studied/lived abroad, there is no guarantee that they know how, or even the fact that they should teach English-related emotional intelligence (EQ) at all (Sparrow & Knight, 2006).

Ideally, plans and strategies regarding teaching EQ should be designed by educators who have the professional capacity and sensitivity to do so, and who understand the local and the foreign culture objectively and in a balanced way (Brown 2007; Huynh, Oakes & Grossman, 2018; Dewaele, Petrides & Furnham, 2008). There should be much emphasis on eradicating the practice of overwhelming learners with grammar and exercises, hoping they will eventually (miraculously) gain all knowledge regarding EQ later. Grammar and English-related EQ should be laterally and systemically introduced and taught as opposed to sudden, ill-prepared and not carefully planned sessions (Komlosi-Ferdinand 2019b).

In the case of foreign teachers, they should participate in such professional communities as well. This is particularly true, as they may not be conscious about the very existence of, or the need, to teach English-related EQ, as this is natural for them. In the case of non-native foreign teachers (with a culture foreign to both the local and to native English speaking countries), they may also revisit such ideas in order not to mix English-related EQ with their own cultural habits. Very importantly, such training should be effectuated before foreign teachers begin the school year, not drip-fed during the year. It is of key importance to set clear and coherent guidelines on the strategies teachers will need to follow, as teaching English-related EQ is *not* a concept based on teachers' personal preferences and cultural views (Chang, 2004). As seen, validating learners' emotions and nurturing their autonomy is a complex task, which requires teacher training in the first place. As societal and cultural factors are key in effective English language teaching, differences in learning among gender groups should gain more emphasis (Sakai, Takagi & Chu, 2010). This is true not only because of differences among both groups' attitudes in certain contexts, but because many cultures require such differentiation.

7. Respecting gender groups' needs in the ESL classroom

The third point is to consider the specific needs of different gender groups in the classroom. Gender stereotyping may prove to be inaccurate both on the individual and societal level on certain occasions. Yet, the separation of gender groups in different classrooms may be advantageous. In fact, many cultures place emphasis on traditional gender roles in every area of life, thus, the importance of maintaining this practice in the foreign language classroom prevails as well. Moreover, by separating genders, much anxiety could be reduced and efficiency increased, as it gives opportunity to teach in a relatable way with relatable material (Dekhtyar, Weber, Helgertz & Herlitz, 2018).

7.1 Male learners

Male learners are often misunderstood. They mostly prefer practical learning content and approaches, and empirical evidence of being able to use English in real-life settings. Classroom practices that require role-play, excessive demonstration of communicative and soft skills, may demotivate male learners. In fact, forcing 'unmanly' activities on male learners, particularly in front of female students, may not necessarily result in positive outcome. Also, forcing male learners out of their comfort zone may be perceived too offensive, childish and humiliating, which may result in heavy loss of motivation and negative classroom behaviour. The learning content may play similar role in motivating or demotivating male learners. A classroom entirely made up of male learners would respond more positively and would engage better when the learning content and activities are more practical and relatable to them. This strategy can expand their comfort zone sensibly and gradually and can validate their identity and social space. This can also open new, safe paths for them in order to be adaptive towards topics and learning contents that would have been deemed unpleasant before. Here, there is no intention to design relatable syllabi in the first instance and later immerse them in completely unrelatable topics, but to widen their interest enough to be able to engage in a variety of learning content without feeling shame or stigmatization.

7.2 Female learners

Similar factors are to be considered with female learners. They need more emotional safety in the classroom, a higher degree of challenge and more intellectually oriented learning content. Moreover, more emotional validation may increase their motivation and widen their engagement and adaptability in a wide variety of contexts and situations. (Kiziltepe, 2003; Weis, Heikamp & Trommsdorff, 2013). The average time of achieving self-confidence among female learners may manifest later as compared to male learners. However, comparing the two groups, or even suggesting having competition between them may result in gaining a superficial knowledge pool, and may be emotionally draining for female learners. Therefore, an all-female classroom may be an ideal place to show additional emotional validation and reassurance of their different learning pace. Finally, it is each institution's responsibility to consider individuals' who identify with the opposite gender and wish to attend one specific gender-segregated classroom.

8. Adaptability and Relatability

The fourth point explores adaptability and relatability. These are the two concepts that describe best the direction language learning should embrace. Hence, my fourth proposal focuses on adaptability and relatability as part of teaching metacognition and learning autonomy. Teaching strategies and content should always be designed and directed in a sensitive, inclusive and differentiated fashion. Nevertheless, relatability to learning goals and context will mostly be a very personal experience, which may vary even among individuals of the same culture, belief and gender to a certain extent. (Komlosi-Ferdinand, 2017). There is an immense combination of traits, past experiences and future expectations that may determine individuals' opinions, and the concepts they identify relatable (Freiermuth & Ito, 2020). Similarly, motivation, whether clearly identified or not, should be a very personal, intrinsic force, as opposed to exposing learners to clichés or concepts of impersonal and unrelatable mass motivation dogmas.

Emphasizing respect for learners' individual needs, wishes and motivation may effectively promote their adaptability in a variety of learning and life circumstances (Komlosi-Ferdinand & Ferdinand, 2016). A recent study by Kudinova and Arzhadeeva (2019) illustrates well both the importance and the gap in adaptability research. They found that a group of ESL learners, who participated in debate classes, developed considerably higher adaptability as opposed to the group who did not. This, significantly points toward the idea that whenever viewpoints can actively be expressed, and some degree of relatability to the teaching exercise is present (in the form of expressing one's viewpoint) positive results will be seen. However, institution based debate groups are mostly controlled, and may even conflict with the learners' interest. Therefore, the more relatability in learning material and methods are present, more learning enjoyment, and therefore learning success is to be expected (Komlosi-Ferdinand, 2019a). The following tool is aimed to develop increased understanding and ability to link the dynamics of self-consciousness, learning autonomy and relatability that leads to adaptation.

8.1 Metacognitive diaries

Metacognitive diaries (Clipa, Colomeischi & Stanciu, 2011), without the need for exhaustive information, are excellent tools. They allow learners to organise their perceptions on their own learning habits, motivations and achievements, and to identify areas for change of direction or improvement (Matsumoto, 1989; Simard, 2010; Ma & Oxford, 2014). Thus, the regular writing and (self) analysis of such diaries may enable learners to organise their thoughts on their progress and to eliminating excessive reliance on the teacher. Learners may also gain reliable data on their own identified learning style preferences, and how to focus on changing needs and strategies that work. Based on the diary's content, learners may realize and accept that motivation may change. Adaptability during such change is not only perfectly normal, but at times is even desirable, and will lead to continuous engagement and lifelong learning habits (2009; Bassett et al., 2010; Muijs, Reynolds & Kyriakides, 2016).

Many learners attend regular or private English lessons in Asia. Their parents often rigidly force the idea on the them that English will contribute to success in general, superior social status, and to better paying jobs in in their future. In reality, such optimistic outcomes rarely happen, yet, if learners are aware that the knowledge of English can be used in a variety of other ways and for purposes, they may succeed in them. Metacognitive diaries may help in

these circumstances, renegotiating the connection among the wish, the need and the possibilities. In most cases, teachers should explain how such diaries work, as this might not be obvious to all learners. This may prevent learners simply amassing data without understanding its significance, which may lead to boredom and abandonment of the project. Importantly, this strategy needs to be adapted to the learners' culture and age.

Moreover, teaching adaptability should not be limited to the reflection of metacognitive diaries, but the teacher should be flexible and adaptable in order be a role model. Languages, and their learning process are not mathematical formulas. While there are rules that cannot be altered, creativity and adaptability through learning should be of priority in the classroom. In this context too, a key concept described previously, emotional validation, should be applied. Needless to say, teachers will not always understand, or find acceptable learners' motivation, or what they find relatable. Nevertheless, validating learners' relatability in order to ensure their adaptability and engagement is crucial. Unfortunately, many learners are not granted such possibility and freedom, not because of lack of resources, but the rigidity of many institutions and the unpreparedness or lack of sensibility of some teachers and some institutions' administration.

9. Conclusion

This opinion article converges the author's researches and experiences as a teacher and lecturer in Central Asia and Eastern Europe throughout a decade. The aim of this paper was to provide comprehensive, empirical and practical solutions to institutions, teachers and learners who wish to succeed in learning English as a global language in a psychologically affordable fashion. As a result, the author offers the new Adaptability and Relatability Motivation framework that suggests directing teaching and learning practices towards contexts and ideas that learners may find relatable. Within a relatable context, learners may become more aware of their own learning preferences, and this may encourage positive attitudes towards autonomous learning as well. When these conditions are present and learners are not pressured into unrelatable motivations, they will be able to adapt their own motivation to their changing and dynamic circumstances which will ensure continuous engagement in the learning process.

As theory is incomplete without practice, the content and use of the framework is detailed in four points that may help to transfer theoretical knowledge into everyday learning scenarios. The strategies described are inexpensive and adaptable to many different cultures. A deliberate effort was made here to benefit teachers, as they are often overlooked, yet are expected to provide unrealistic results often without proper training and instruction. Indeed, "Everyone is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid." This quote, often attributed to Albert Einstein, but of unknown origin, summarizes well Global-English mass education. It also depicts the struggles of both teachers and learners which can and should eventually be changed. Everyone in education should feel respected and empowered, so this new capacity can be transferred to other areas of life as well.

The four points recommend some flexible strategies and argue against negative assumptions and outdated classroom practices. In fact, the points unveil that no specific motivation should be taken for granted, while learners' attitude and aims may reflect a different perspective. Identity, culture, social space and gender often define this reality. Thus, forcing learners into a wrong motivational mould could entirely condition their emotions towards the

classroom and the teacher. Nevertheless, by validating learners' emotions and specific needs while teaching them English language related emotional intelligence and soft skills, may secure emotional stability both in and outside the classroom. Moreover, considering gender differences in attitudes may further expand knowledge about emotional and practical needs to be considered in the classroom. In particular, male and female learners' self-esteem, emotional stability and possible different language learning aims and perspectives need to be seriously considered. Such differences also govern perceptions towards the teacher. While the teacher's persona may indisputably important, emotional and cognitive dependence on it should be a practice to be avoided at all cost. In fact, as argued, teachers should teach learning autonomy and help learners to find their own learning style preferences. Teachers also should avoid nationalistic or colonising attitudes in order to maintain a balanced and neutral milieu in the classroom, and which does not result in identity conflicts but allows the process of English language learning to be healthy and productive.

Therefore, if positive role models and motivating circumstances are present, learners may easily develop adaptability to new circumstances. However, if learners do not understand or relate classroom circumstances, teachers and teaching methodologies, only chaos will result, preventing learning success. Heraclitus observed similar conflicts in human behaviour already 2,500 years ago, as he pointed out: "A lot of learning does not teach (a person the possession of) understanding" (Robinson, 1991, p. 31). Thus, no matter the length of time and the flood of English material to which learners are exposed, if the teaching methods and material are unrelatable, learning success will not occur. However, as outlined in this article, combination of proper direction, validation, metacognition and autonomy can transform the learning experience in its entirety. By implementing the here offered strategies, learners will flourish in new circumstances and transform their understanding of learning altogether. Nevertheless, further research is needed on motivation. In particular, the healthy boundaries of motivation need to be investigated. This is very important, as nowadays external motivation is often enforced on individuals in an unrelatable fashion and indigestible quantity. This could lead to learners and teachers being so overwhelmed that it could result in motivational immunity. This should be avoided at all costs as language learning is very important for millions of people worldwide. Their learning experience should be a meaningful one, connected to personal growth and better opportunities.

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