Ten commandments for motivating language learners: results of an empirical study

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The question of how to motivate language learners has been a neglected area in L2 motivation research, and even the few available analyses lack an adequate research base. This article presents the results of an empirical survey aimed at obtaining classroom data on motivational strategies. Two hundred Hungarian teachers of English from various language teaching institutions were asked how important they considered a selection of 51 strategies and how frequently they used them in their teaching practice. Based on their responses we have compiled a concise set of ten motivational macrostrategies, which we have called the 'Ten commandments for motivating language learners'. On the basis of the frequency data, we also discuss which of the commandments tend to be particularly underutilized in the language classroom.

I Introduction

When trying to explain any success or failure in second language (L2) learning, the term 'motivation' is often used by teachers and students alike. We take the view that L2 motivation is one of the most important factors that determine the rate and success of L2 attainment: it provides the primary impetus to initiate learning the L2 and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process. Without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough to ensure student achievement. As Good and Brophy

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1362-1688(98)LR029.OA

Table 1   Components of foreign language learning motivation

Level	Motivational components
Language Level	Integrative motivational subsystem
	Instrumental motivational subsystem
Learner Level	Need for achievement
	Self-confidence
	• language use anxiety
	• perceived L2 competence
	• causal attributions
	• self-efficacy
Learning Situation Level	
Course-specific motivational components	Interest
	Relevance
	Expectancy
	Satisfaction
Teacher-specific motivational components	Affiliative motive
	Authority type
	Direct socialization of student motivation
	• modelling
	• task presentation
	• feedback
Group-specific motivational components	Goal-orientedness
	Norm and reward system
	Group cohesion
	Classroom goal structure

Source: Dornyei, 1994a: 280

traits that the learner has developed in the past. We can identify two motivational components underlying the motivational processes at this level: *need for achievement* and *self-confidence,* the latter encompassing various aspects of language anxiety, perceived L2 competence, attributions about past experiences, and self-efficacy.

The *Learning Situation Level* is associated with situation-specific motives rooted in various aspects of language learning in a classroom setting. Within this level, three main types of motivational sources can be separated:

1) *Course-specific motivational components,* which are related to the syllabus, the teaching materials, the teaching method and the learning tasks. These are best described within the framework of four motivational conditions proposed by Keller (1983) and subsequently by Crookes and Schmidt (1991): *interest* (intrinsic motivation centred around the individuals' inherent curiosity and desire to know more about themselves and their environment), *relevance* (the extent to which the student feels that the instruction is connected to important personal needs, values or goals), *expectancy* (perceived likelihood of success) and *satisfaction* (the outcome of an activity, referring to the combination of extrinsic rewards such as praise or good marks, and to intrinsic rewards such as enjoyment and pride).

2) *Teacher-specificmotivational components,* which are related to the teacher's behaviour, personality and teaching style, and include the *affiliative motive* to please the teacher, *authority type* (authoritarian or democratic teaching style) and *direct socialization of student motivation* (modelling, task presentation and feedback).

3) *Group-specific motivational components,* which are related to the group dynamics of the learner group (for an overview, see Dornyei and Malderez, 1997, in press; Ehrman and Dornyei in press) and include *goal-orientedness*, the *norm and reward system, group cohesion* and *classroom goal structure* (competitive, cooperative or individualistic).

II Motivating language learners

With motivation being as important a factor in learning success as argued earlier, skills in motivating learners should be seen as central to teaching effectiveness. However, this significance has not been appropriately reflected in the L2 literature: although there have been a number of publications that have analysed and described motivational strategies (e.g. Brown, 1994; Cranmer, 1996; Dornyei, 1994a; Oxford and Shearin, 1994; Williams and Burden, 1997), the amount of research devoted to motivating learners has been rather meagre relative to the total amount of research on L2

motivation. The same tendency can be noted if we look at general motivational psychology: far more research has been conducted on identifying various motives and validating motivational theories than on developing techniques to increase motivation. As Good and Brophy summarize, 'motivation [in the classroom] did not receive much scholarly attention until recently, so that teachers were forced to rely on unsystematic "bag-of-tricks" approaches or on advice coming from questionable theorizing' (1994: 212). There have, however, been some valuable exceptions to this generalization, e.g. Burden (1995), Good and Brophy (1994), Jones and Jones (1995), McCombs and Pope (1994) and Raffini (1993, 1996); two further works are of particular relevance to the topic: 'Synthesis of research on strategies for motivating students to learn' by Brophy (1987), and a recent theoretical summary, 'Motivation in education' by Pintrich and Schunk (1996), in which the discussion of the practical implications of the various theories surveyed is a prominent feature.

In order to develop a comprehensive set of valid motivational strategies for direct classroom application, we need, in the first place, a detailed enough description of the relevant motives that need to be promoted. Once we have this, it becomes possible to develop a systematic array of specific strategies that enhance various aspects of the motivation complex. At this point, however, a special difficulty arises: motivation is a highly complex concept that attempts to explain nothing less than the volitional control of human behaviour; thus, the number of possible motivational techniques is rather extensive, and even a selection of the most important strategies will make up an extremely long list. For example, the most systematic collection of L2 motivational strategies (Dornyei, 1994a) consists of 30 macrostrategies, each of which are broken down to several microstrategies and techniques, resulting in a total of nearly 100 concrete suggestions and recommendations. This is, admittedly, rather overwhelming and difficult for the average classroom practitioner to manage. Indeed, experience gained from various teacher-training courses has shown us that there is a need for a smaller set of strategies that teachers should pay special attention to when trying to implement a motivationally conscious teaching approach. In answer to this call, the first author compiled a set of macrostrategies, which he called

the 'Ten commandments for motivating language learners' (Dörnyei, 1996b) (see Appendix); we hasten to add here that even though the term 'commandment' might suggest otherwise, these motivational strategies were intended to be broad recommendations rather than perspective rules that every teacher must observe in order to motivate their students. The positive reception of this list by teachers seemed to confirm that the generation of a distilled set of macrostrategies might indeed make the concept of motivating learners more teacher-friendly.

One weakness of this list was that it was not based on systematic research; rather, it was the result of a synthesis of personal experience and a semi-formal survey amongst two groups of graduate students and a group of international teachers on a British Council summer course. Thus, Gardner and Tremblay's (1994) comments on the earlier, longer list of motivational strategies (Dornyei, 1994a) were also valid regarding this distilled set:

> we believe that many of the generalizations made by Dornyei are valuable. We also believe, however, that it is valuable to conduct research in order to evaluate hypotheses. In this light, we would like to suggest that the various strategies that Dornyei presents could well be considered hypotheses that could be treated in the context of second language acquisition. (Gardner and Tremblay, 1994: 364)

The present study is an attempt to revise the original list of 'ten commandments' by basing them on data concerning the beliefs and practices of language teachers. An extensive list of potentially useful motivational strategies was 'weighted' in terms of their classroom relevance by a relatively large sample of practising teachers working in various teaching institutions. As a result, we have obtained a rank scale of the strategies, which was then used to form the basis of the modified set of the 'ten commandments'. We have also asked the teachers to indicate the extent to which they have actually used the strategies, and on the basis of their responses we highlight those commandments which tend to be particularly underutilized in the language classroom.

III   Method

1   Participants

Participants were 200 teachers of English in Hungary (47 males, 151 females and two with missing gender data), teaching in a variety of institutional contexts, ranging from elementary schools to universities; as can be seen in Table 2, many of the participants were teaching in several contexts at the same time, which is a typical feature of English teaching in Hungary, due to the great demand for qualified professionals. In selecting the respondents we hoped to achieve a certain diversity; data were collected from several locations in Hungary, and the participating teachers also showed wide differences in their teaching experience: 6% had less than one year's experience and 34% had been teaching over ten years. In addition, 12% of the sample, 24 of the respondents, were native speakers of English teaching in Hungary.

2   Instruments

Teachers' experiences about strategy use can be described from two aspects: focusing on a) how important the participants considered certain motivational strategies, and b) how frequently they actually used these. In order to cover both aspects, we developed two questionnaires which included the same set of motivational strategies, and respondents were asked to rate each strategy on a seven-point scale in terms of its *perceived importance* ('not important' → 'very important') or the *frequency of its use* ('hardly ever' → 'very often') based on the teacher's past experience. Because we assumed that the two types of rating would

Table 2   Types of the participants' (N = 200) teaching context*

Type of context	N	Percentage (%)
University	97	48.5
Secondary school	76	38.0
Elementary school	27	13.5
Language school	64	32.0
Private practice	58	29.0

*One teacher may teach in more than one context.

influence each other (e.g. once a teacher has rated a strategy as very important, they might be reluctant to admit its underutilization in their own practice), participating teachers were given only one of the two questionnaires. The 'importance' questionnaires were filled in by 116 participants and the 'frequency' questionnaires by 84.[1]

The selection of the strategies to be included in the two questionnaires was based on Dornyei (1994a), and a first version was piloted with 20 respondents. As a result of this pilot study, the wording was revised in several places, some strategies were omitted from the list, and some new ones that the respondents considered important were added. The final version of the questionnaires contained 51 motivational strategies (see Table 3 for a complete list) and a few personal questions eliciting background information about the teachers. Because the respondents were teachers of

Table 3   Final rank order of the strategy scales and the individual strategies with their importance scores and standard deviations (the items in italics determined the place of the scales in the importance rank scale)

Scale	Strategy	x̄	SD
1 Teacher	* *Prepare for the lessons properly.*	*6.70*	.67
	* Show a good example by being committed and motivated.	6.43	.89
	*Try to behave naturally and be yourself in class.	6.35	.87
	* Be as sensitive and accepting as you can.	6.14	.94
2 Climate	* *Create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom.*	*6.46*	*.82*
	* Bring in humour, laughter and smile.	6.21	.94
	* Have games and fun in class.	5.52	1.35
	* Have game-like competitions within class.	4.90	1.45
3 Task	* *Give clear instructions.*	*6.45*	*.86*
	* Provide guidance about how to do the task.	5.70	1.09
	* State the purpose and the utility of every task.	4.60	1.73
4 Rapport	* *Develop a good relationship with your students.*	*6.37*	*.79*
5 Self-confidence	* *Give positive feedback and appraisal.*	*6.32*	*.78*
	* Make sure that students experience success regularly.	6.25	.93
	* Constantly encourage your students.	6.21	.89
	* Demystify mistakes: they are a natural part of learning.	5.67	1.32
	* Select tasks that do not exceed the learners' competence.	5.33	1.49

Table 3   continued

Scale	Strategy	$\bar{x}$	SD
6 Interest	* *Select interesting task.*	6.28	.76
	* Choose interesting topics and supplementary materials.	6.23	.80
	* Offer a variety of materials.	6.05	.94
	* Vary the activities.	5.97	1.03
	* Make tasks challenging to involve your students.	5.86	.99
	* Build on the learners' interests rather than tests or grades, as the main energizer for learning.	5.43	1.24
	* Raise learners' curiosity by introducing unexpected or exotic elements.	4.90	1.45
7 Autonomy	* *Encourage creative and imaginative ideas.*	6.70	*1.03*
	* Encourage questions and other contributions from the students.	6.07	1.05
	* Share as much responsibility to organize the learning process with your students as possible.	4.56	1.75
8 Personal relevance	* *Try and fill the tasks with personal content that is relevant to the students.*	5.77	*1.30*
9 Goal	* *Help the students develop realistic expectations about their learning.*	5.66	*1.07*
	* Set up several specific learning goals for the learners.	5.56	1.27
	* Increase the group's goal-orientedness.	5.22	1.28
	* Do a needs analysis about the learners' language goals and needs.	5.18	1.41
	* Help students design their individual study plans.	4.46	1.68
10 Culture	* *Familiarize the learners with the cultural background of the language they are learning.*	5.60	7.25
	* Use authentic materials.	5.57	1.34
	* Invite native speakers to some classes.	4.34	1.97
	* Find penfriends for your learners.	3.26	1.73
11 Group	* *Include regular groupwork in your class.*	5.46	7.32
	* Help students to get to know one another.	5.31	1.48
	* Be an ordinary member of the group as much as possible.	4.35	1.90
	* Organize extracurricular (out-of-class) activities.	3.86	1.60
12 Effort	* *Help students realize that it is mainly effort that is needed for success.*	5.36	7.23
13 Usefulness	* *Emphasize the usefulness of the language*	5.25	7.44

Table 3   continued

Scale	Strategy	$\bar{x}$	SD
14 Reward	* *Besides the grades, give the learners other rewards.*	*5.17*	7.57
15 Rule	* *Help maintain the set of classroom rules that students accepted.*	5.09	7.68
	* Involve students in creating their own classroom rules.	4.25	1.76
	* Regularly review the classroom rules with your students.	3.75	1.68
16 Finished products	* *Allow students to create products that they can display or perform.*	5.08	*1.38*
17 Decoration	* *Encourage the learners to decorate the classroom and make it cosy in any way they can.*	3.97	*1.88*
18 Comparison	* *Avoid any comparison of students to one another.*	*4.32*	7.65

English (and some of them native speakers of English), the language of both questionnaires was English.

3 Data analysis

Data from the questionnaires were submitted to a number of statistical analyses. The 51 strategy items were grouped into clusters and the internal consistency of these scales was verified by means of reliability analysis. Items which reduced the internal consistency of a scale were omitted from the scales and were treated as single-item variables. The importance and frequency items were compared using standardized scores. (More details about the analyses will be provided below.)

IV Results and discussion

/ Importance items

As a first step in the data analysis, the 51 strategies were rank-ordered according to the importance attached to them by the teachers. At this point we faced the problem that several strategies were closely interrelated. When Nelecting the items for the questionnaire, we intentionally included several variations of a

particular macrostrategy to increase the questionnaire's reliability. For example, the macrostrategy concerning the learners' *interest* was broken down to items such as 'select interesting tasks' or 'offer a variety of materials', etc. Since the distilled set of the 'ten commandments' was to contain broader macrostrategies rather than specific techniques, we needed to consider whole scales rather than the individual items constituting them. The problem, then, was how to determine the importance value attached to a complex macrostrategy: simply taking the mean values of the related items would have been misleading, since one marginal item could have reduced even very high scores obtained for other items. For example, the macrostrategy concerning the familiarization of the learners with the L2 *culture* included several items with high importance scores, but one related item, 'find penfriends for your learners', was not considered very important by the teachers. Therefore, a mean score would have been depressed by this item and would have thus presented a false rating of the issue of promoting the L2 culture.

After considering several ways of getting around this problem (e.g. excluding some items), the following stepwise method was used. We started with the highest-ranking strategy in the importance rank order of the 51 strategies and added to it all those strategies that appeared to belong to the same conceptual domain. In this way, we obtained a scale of related strategies; the internal consistency of the scale was checked by means of a reliability analysis: a strategy was added to the cluster only if this increased the scale's Cronback Alpha coefficient. Having finalized a scale, we took the next strategy in the rank order that had not yet been included in a scale and repeated the same procedure. Having gone through the whole list, a total of ten scales were formed following the above procedure and eight strategies remained individual-item variables (i.e. they could not be added to any of the ten existing scales and were not interrelated themselves). The importance index of a scale was taken to be the highest coefficient of all the individual items constituting it (i.e. the item to which the others were added). Table 3 presents the rank order of all the variables thus obtained.

The first ten entries (either strategy scales or individual strategies) in Table 3 are as ones that teachers considered most

Important from a motivational point of view and, therefore, these variables were used to form the basis of the 'Ten commandments for motivating language learners: final version'. The final wording of the 10 macrostrategies, with a brief discussion, is as follows (Table 4):

1. *Set a personal example with your own behaviour.* Role models in general have been found to be very influential on student motivation (Pintrich and Schunk, 1996), and the most prominent model in the classroom is the teacher: student attitudes and orientations towards learning are, to a large extent, modelled after their teachers both in terms of effort expenditure and orientations of interest in the subject (Dornyei, 1994a). The importance of leacher motivation in motivating learners had largely been ignored in the psychological literature until a very recent edited volume by Bess (1997) finally targeted on issues related to 'motivating faculty to teach effectively' (see also Jesuíno, 1996, for a discussion of the relationship between motivation and leadership).

2. *Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.* This commandment requires little justification: in Gardner's (1985) model, 'attitudes toward the learning situation' is a key determinant of the motivation complex, and any practising teacher is aware of the fact that student anxiety created by a tense classroom climate is one of the most potent factors that undermine L2 motivation (e.g. MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991; Young, 1991).

3. *Present the tasks properly.* This commandment was not part of the earlier set (see Appendix), yet its high position in the rank scale makes sense: the way teachers present a task is a powerful tool in raising students' interest in the activity as well as in

Table 4   Ten commandments for motivating language learners: final version

1   Set a personal example with your own behaviour.
2   Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.
3   Present the tasks properly.
4   Develop a good relationship with the learners.
5   Increase the learners' linguistic self-confidence.
6   Make the language classes interesting.
7   Promote learner autonomy.
8   Personalize the learning process.
9   Increase the learners' goal-orientedness.
10 Familiarize learners with the target language culture.

increasing the expectancy of task fulfilment by setting realistic goals and offering effective strategies in reaching those. Task presentation, therefore, has been included in the motivation construct in Table 1 as a major constituent of the direct socialization of student motivation.

4. *Develop a good relationship with the learners.* This is a well-known principle among teachers: a great deal of the students' learning effort is energized by the affiliative motive to please the teacher, and a good rapport between the teacher and the students is a basic requirement in any modern, student-centred approach to education (e.g. Rogers, 1983).

5. *Increase the learners' linguistic self-confidence.* This commandment reflects the recognition in the last 20 years that one's perceptions of one's own competence as well as judgements of one's abilities to achieve a goal greatly determine the person's aspiration to initiate and perform goal-directed action. It must be stressed that self-confidence is not directly related to one's actual ability or competence but rather to subjective ability/competence; it is not necessarily what someone knows or can do which will determine their L2 use but rather what they think they know or can do. For example, some people feel quite confident about talking with only 100 words, whereas others with an extensive L2 knowledge shy away from putting that knowledge into action. Self-confidence was first introduced in the L2 literature by Clement (1980) to describe a motivational process in multiethnic settings (determined by the quality and quantity of previous interethnic contact), and Clement *et al.* (1994) showed that it was also a major motivational subsystem in foreign language learning situations (i.e. where there is no direct contact with members of the L2 community).

6. *Make the language classes interesting.* The basis of this commandment is the general observation that the quality of the learners' subjective experience is an important contributor to motivation to learn (e.g. Deci and Ryan, 1985; Schiefele and Csikszentmihalyi, 1994). Accordingly, the concept of 'interest' has been given its due importance in Gardner's (1985) original model and also in more recent approaches to L2 motivation (e.g. Crookes and Schmidt, 1991; Dornyei, 1994a; Schmidt *et al.*, 1996; Schumann, 1998; Tremblay and Gardner, 1995; Williams and Burden, 1997).

7. *Promote learner autonomy.* The emphasis on learner autonomy in L2 motivation research is relatively new; however, Dickinson's (1995), Ehrman and Dörnyei's (in press), and Ushioda's (1996) reviews and discussions provide evidence that L2 motivation and learner autonomy go hand in hand, that is, "enhanced motivation is conditional on learners taking responsibility for their own learning . . . and perceiving that their learning successes and failures are to be attributed to their own efforts and strategies rather than to factors outside their control' (Dickinson, 1995: 173-74). These self-regulatory conditions are characteristics of learner autonomy, and thus, as Ushioda explicitly states, 'Autonomous language learners are by definition motivated learners' (1996: 2).

8. *Personalize the learning process.* This commandment concerns the need that the L2 course should be *personally relevant* to the students. In the earlier set of commandments there was a similar item, 'Make the course relevant by doing a needs analysis and adjusting the syllabus accordingly.' The current version of the commandment is broader in that it extends relevance to the personal content of tasks as well (e.g. sharing personal information, interpersonal awareness-raising). This has also been seen as a key factor in promoting peer relations and group development in the classroom (e.g. Dornyei and Malderez, in press).

9. *Increase the learners' goal-orientedness.* This commandment was not part of the original set and we were pleased to see it qualify for the top ten entries in our survey. This is particularly so because the question of goal-setting has been rather neglected in the L2 field, even though the study of various aspects of goals has had a long standing history in motivational psychology, and goal-setting theory (cf. Locke and Latham, 1994) is one of the 'hottest' issues in current motivation research. As Oxford and Shearin have concluded 'Goal-setting can have exceptional importance in stimulating L2 learning motivation, and it is therefore shocking that so little time and energy are spent in the L2 classroom on goal-setting' (1994: 19). In the L2 field, goals have been traditionally referred to as 'orientations', which, as discussed earlier, have almost exclusively been looked upon either as integrative or instrumental in nature (see, however, Clement and Kruidenier, 1983). More specific features of educational goals

related to the students' learning process have been 'discovered' by L2 researchers in the 1990s, and currently a number of theories do include a goal dimension (e.g. Dornyei, 1994a Schmidt *et al.*, 1996; Schumann, 1998; Tremblay and Gardner, 1995).

10. *Familiarize learners with the target language culture.* In spite of recent efforts in L2 motivation research to emphasize other-than-cultural aspects of motivation, Gardner's claim that language learning success is dependent on the learners' affective predisposition towards the target linguistic-cultural group is still valid:

> the words, sounds, grammatical principles and the like that the language teacher tries to present are more than aspects of some linguistic code; they are integral parts of another culture. As a result, students' attitudes toward the specific language group are bound to influence how successful they will be in incorporating aspects of that language. (1985: 6)

This suggests that the age-old practice of teaching languages through their cultures does have certain scientific basis and, therefore, there is a need to make the L2 'real' by introducing learners its cultural background, using authentic materials, and promoting contact with native speakers of the L2.

Finally, let us examine to what extent the ten commandments cover the motivational components presented in the extended framework in Table 1. The *Language Level* is represented by two commandments, numbers 8 and 10 (the 'relevance' component of the former also concerns pragmatic relevance). In the *Learner Level,* need for achievement is not covered, which is no surprise, since need for achievement is a personality trait that does not lend itself easily to modification. The complex of self-confidence, on the other hand, is the target of two commandments (2 and 5). The first two main dimensions of the *Learning Situation Level*, 'course-specific motivational components' and 'teacher-specific motivational components' are covered fairly evenly by commandments 6, 8 and 9, as well as 4 and 7, respectively (naturally, due to the limited number of commandments, not every subcomponent has equal weight). There is only one area not represented: the rewards given by the teacher. Although there was one item in the questionnaire specifically focusing on rewards, it was not endorsed by the respondents very strongly. This is all the

more interesting, since traditionally the teacher's motivating function has been seen solely as their role in dispensing such rewards as grades, privileges, praise, prizes and stickers. Recently, however, the 'carrot and stick' principle has not featured very prominently in modern educational approaches.

The most underrepresented area in the model is 'group-specific motivational components'. In fact, only one of the commandments, number 9, concerns any of the subcomponents, and even there the relationship is not completely straightforward, since commandment 9 focuses more on goal-orientedness at the individual rather than the group level. It is noteworthy that no aspects of 'group-building' emerged as highly esteemed motivational strategies, even though the questionnaire did contain several items addressing group issues. Apparently, language teachers (at least in Hungary) are largely unaware of, or play down, the impact the dynamics of the learner group has on the members' learning achievement. This issue requires further research, as it has been increasingly suggested recently that group-level variables significantly affect the members' achievement motivation (e.g. Hotho-Jackson, 1995; Little and Madigan, 1997; Silver and Bufanio, 1996; Stroebe *et al.*, 1996; Swezey *et al.*, 1994; Weldon and Weingart, 1993).

2 *Frequency items*

The purpose of administering the frequency questionnaires was to decide the extent to which the motivational commandments were actually perceived to be used in the L2 classroom, so that the underutilized ones can be highlighted for teachers. There are three different measures to describe the frequency of the strategies:

a) The mean frequency of each strategy, which is a fast way of determining the degree of strategy use.

b) The difference between the mean frequency of a strategy and the mean frequency of all the strategies, which provides an indication of whether the use of a particular strategy is below or above the average frequency of strategy use.

c) Standardizing the importance and frequency scores for each strategy and computing their difference (i.e. subtracting

importance z-scores from frequency z-scores). This results in a coefficient that describes whether the relative frequency of an item matches the relative importance attached to it. A negative final score in this procedure indicates that the strategy's perceived importance exceeds the frequency of its use, whereas a positive figure indicates overuse of the strategy relative to its importance. In the following, this measure will be referred to as the strategies' *relative frequency*. This is probably the most meaningful measure of the three, since it also takes into account the qualitative rating of the strategies, as it is assumed that the more important a strategy is, the more attention we need to pay to it in actual classroom practice.

Table 5 contains the three frequency measures. With the first two measures, only figures concerning the individual strategies are given, since by computing scale means we would have run into the same problem as with the importance scores (i.e. the case of marginal items). With the third measure, the strategies' relative frequency, we have also provided scale scores since, in this case, standardized z-score differences were used in the analysis and therefore a marginal strategy that was not used very often did not necessarily depress the scale mean if it was not rated as very important by the teachers. However, as we can see in the table, there was considerable within-scale variation in the coefficients and therefore the scale scores do not really represent uniform tendencies.

It can be seen in Table 5 that the commandment which is most frequently overlooked in classroom practice concerns promoting the learners' *goal-orientedness*. All the strategies subsumed by this commandment are underutilized relative to their perceived importance, and four out of the five strategies show a below-average frequency. This provides empirical support for Oxford and Shearin's (1994) observation about the underutilization of classroom goal-setting procedures.

The commandment concerning the *teacher's own behaviour* also shows signs of underuse, but this case differs from the previous one: All the items show considerable above-average frequency, yet the importance attached to the items greatly exceeds the frequency of their use and, therefore, the relative-frequency figures indicate

Table 5 Frequency statistics of the first ten entries in the importance rank scale: relative frequency (z-diff)[a], mean frequency ($\bar{x}$); item's mean frequency's difference from the overall mean frequency of all the items ($\bar{x}$-diff)

Strategy	Z-diff	$\bar{x}$	$\bar{x}$-diff
1 Teacher	-.21		
* Prepare for the lessons properly.*	-.58	6.18	1.11
* Show a good example by being committed and motivated.	-.39	6.04	.97
* Try to behave naturally and be yourself in class.	.21	6.61	1.54
* Be as sensitive and accepting as you can.	-.08	5.99	.92
2 Climate	.05		
* Create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom.*	-.19	6.30	1.23
* Bring in humour, laughter and smile.	.19	6.39	1.32
* Have games and fun in class.	-.01	5.23	.16
* Have game-like competitions within class.	.19	4.60	-.47
3 Task	.04		
* Give clear instructions.*	-.46	6.11	1.04
* Provide guidance about how to do the task.	.40	5.93	.86
* State the purpose and the utility of every task.	.18	4.18	-.89
4 Rapport	-.14		
* Develop a good relationship with your students.*	-.14	6.24	1.17
5 Self-confidence	-.06		
* Give positive feedback and appraisal.*	-.13	6.18	1.11
* Make sure that students experience success regularly.	-.60	5.55	.48
* Constantly encourage your students.	-.20	5.95	.88
* Demystify mistakes: they are a natural part of learning.	.19	5.65	.58
* Select tasks that do not exceed the learners' competence.	.43	5.46	.39
6 Interest	-.10		
* Select interesting task.*	-.32	5.90	.83
* Choose interesting topics and supplementary materials.	-.17	6.01	.94
* Offer a variety of materials.	-.09	5.86	.79
* Vary the activities.	.03	5.89	.82
* Make tasks challenging to involve your students.	-.55	5.07	.00
* Build on the learners' interests rather than tests or grades, as the main energizer for learning.	.05	5.18	.11
* Raise learners' curiosity by Introducing unexpected or exotic elements.	.37	4.81	-.26

Table 5   continued

Strategy	Z-diff	x̄	x̄-diff
7 Autonomy	.01		
* *Encourage creative and imaginative ideas.*	-.18	5.82	.75
* Encourage questions and other contributions from the students.	.25	6.27	1.20
* Share as much responsibility to organize the learning process with your students as possible.	.08	4.01	−1.06
* Involve students in choosing the learning materials.	-.11	3.67	-1.40
8 Personal relevance	.14		
* *Try and fill the tasks with personal content that is relevant to the students.*	.14	5.65	.58
9 Goal	-.23		
* *Help the students develop realistic expectations about their learning.*	-.05	5.37	.30
* Set up several specific learning goals for the learners.	-.31	4.94	-.13
* Increase the group's goal-orientedness.	-.12	4.69	-.38
* Do a needs analysis about the learners' language goals and needs.	-.09	4.67	-.40
* Help students design their individual study plans.	-.56	3.14	-1.93
10 Culture	.02		
* *Familiarize the learners with the cultural background of the language they are learning.*	.60	6.04	.97
* Use authentic materials.	.44	5.80	.73
* Invite native speakers to some classes.	-.96	2.53	-2.55
* Find penfriends for your learners.	-.31	2.14	-2.93

[a]Z-scores used; negative figures indicate underutilization relative to the item's importance, positive figures indicate relative overuse.

underutilization. Of all the relative frequency coefficients this is where we find the highest negative figure, -.58 for 'Show a good example by being committed and motivated.' This clearly indicates that in the teachers' evaluation this commandment is not done justice to in the classroom. Indeed, the only item in this scale where we can see a relative overuse is a neutral one: 'Try to behave naturally and be yourself in class.'

None of the other commandments (of course, without taking into consideration commandments 4 and 8, which involve only one strategy item each) show an unambiguous trend in the frequency of their classroom application. In each case we find considerable

within-scale variation in the frequency of the microstrategies related to the commandment's various aspects. Let us now highlight some individual strategy items with particularly low frequency figures.

Besides the items included in the two scales already mentioned, there are four items where the relative frequency figures are below -.4, indicating a serious mismatch between the attached importance and the actual use of these strategies: 'Invite native speakers to your class' (-.96), 'Make sure that students experience success regularly' (-.60), 'Make tasks challenging to involve your students' (-.55) and 'Give clear instructions' (-.46). The underutilization of the first strategy is likely to stem from technical difficulties: there are simply not enough available native speakers of English around in Hungary for teachers to invite (in addition, the fact that some of the respondents were native speakers themselves also affected this result). The other three strategies concern areas where teachers can and, according to our survey, should develop. Indeed, providing a feeling of success or challenge, and giving clear instructions, are well-known for being difficult to achieve, and the teachers in this survey appeared to be aware of these issues.

V Conclusion

The study presented in this article was aimed at drawing up a set of the most important macrostrategies that language teachers could use to enhance motivation in their classes. In order to provide some empirical founding for our recommended list of strategies, we used data from practising teachers working in a variety of institutions. These data were interpreted in the light of our past experience and the research literature, resulting in the formulation of a set of ten motivational macrostrategies, which share many similarities with an earlier, partly intuitively compiled list. Indeed, all the items on the earlier list are covered by the revised commandments to some extent. The new set contains two additional macrostrategies related to tasks and goals. The similarity between the intuitive and the research-based lists serves as a reassurance about the validity of our results, as does the fact that the emerging final set appears to be supported by recent

motivational theory and covers most well-documented dimensions of L2 motivation.

At this point it needs to be emphasized once again that no motivational strategy has absolute and general value because such strategies are to be implemented in dynamically changing and very diverse learning contexts, in which the personality of the individual learners and the teacher, as well as the composition and structure of the learner group, will always interplay with the effectiveness of the strategy. Our final list of strategies also raises some further questions. One, discussed briefly before, is the absence of any strategies related to consciously building a cohesive learner group. The results indicate that there is a need to raise teachers' awareness about the importance of group dynamics in the learning process. Another question concerns the universal nature of the commandments. In an ideal world, a 'commandment' should be valid regardless of time and place. Our proposed set, however, may be somewhat lacking in this respect. The proposed macrostrategies derive from observations primarily in a European foreign language learning environment and, while many of the strategies mentioned have been endorsed in the literature for other contexts as well, we cannot say with certainty that the ten commandments are valid in every cultural, ethnolinguistic and institutional setting. There is clearly much room for further research in this respect.

Our secondary analysis of the frequency of the actual classroom use of the proposed commandments shows that promoting goal-setting and goal-orientedness was a rather neglected area in the participating teachers' practice. The data also point to the fact that the teachers' own behavioural modelling could be exploited more thoroughly in motivating learners. Some additional subfields where improvements were considered desirable included: creating regular opportunities for students to experience success; making learning activities challenging and thus involving; and giving clearer instructions.

Finally, we would like to point out that the present study could offer only a tentative ranking of the various motivational strategies, since teacher beliefs may not coincide with actual strategy effectiveness. Our investigation did not involve the testing of the learning benefits of the strategies or their *actual* importance and frequency, but rather yielded only *perceived* measures; further

research following an experimental design is needed to examine the extent to which the commandments actually work in the classroom, and to specify the optimal conditions for and constraints of their use.

Note

[1] We distributed the questionnaires on a random basis to the participating colleagues. The difference in the size of the two subsamples is due to the fact that a particularly helpful colleague made several copies of the questionnaire she was given (which happened to be the 'importance' version) and recruited further respondents. In spite of this, we believe that the two teacher subsamples are representative of the same population and therefore their results can be compared.

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Appendix   Earlier, semi-intuitive set of ten motivational macrostrategies

1. Make the language classes interesting by selecting varied and engaging topics, materials, and activities.
2. Have humour, fun, and games in class.
3. Create a pleasant and friendly atmosphere.
4. Promote learner autonomy by allowing freedom in the classroom and sharing as much responsibility with the learners as you can.
5. Make the course relevant by doing a needs analysis and adjusting the syllabus accordingly.
6. Set a personal example in being motivated and committed yourself.
7. Develop the learners' confidence by encouraging them, giving them positive feedback, and making sure that they regularly have a feeling of success.
8. Make the foreign language 'real' by introducing its culture, using authentic materials, inviting native speakers, and arranging native-speaking penfriends for your students.
9. Develop a good and trustful relationship with the learners.
10. Emphasize the usefulness of the knowledge of the foreign language.

Source: Dornyei, 1996b