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Language Teacher Motivation in Slovakia: A Case Study of Slovak Teachers of English

by

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements....2
Abstract....5
List of Tables and Figures....6
Chapter 1: Introduction....7
1.1 Slovakia's Educational System....7
1.2 Language Teacher Motivation (LTM) in Slovakia....7
1.3 Research Questions:....8
1.4 Overview of the Dissertation....9
CHAPTER 2: Literature Review....10
2.1 Language Teacher Motivation Definitions....11
2.2 Language Teacher Motivation Theories....12
2.2.1 Expectancy-Value Theory and the FIT-Choice Model....12
2.2.2 Possible Selves, Self-Discrepancy Theory, and the Feasible Self....13
2.2.3 Continuing the Research - Acts of Imagination....14
2.2.4 Emotional Labour....15
2.2.5 Language Teacher Vision....16
2.3 Language Teacher Motivation Studies....18
2.3.1 Motivation to Begin Teaching - Pre-Service Teachers....18
2.3.2 In-Service Teachers – Vision and Context....18
2.3.3 Motivation and Quality of Work Life....19
2.3.4 Motivational and Demotivational Factors....20
2.4 Connecting the Literature to this Study....21
Chapter 3: Methodology....22
3.1 Research Questions....22
3.2 Study Design....23
3.2.1 Participants....23
3.2.2 Pilot Study....24
3.2.3 CUREC and Consent Forms....24
3.2.4 Instruments....25
3.3 Data Collection Process....30
3.4 Data Analysis....30

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion 36
4.1 RQ1: How does Slovak EFL teachers' motivation change over a school year? 37
4.1.1 Motivation Early in the Year 37
4.1.2 Late Autumn and Winter 38
4.1.3 Second Semester 39
4.1.4 General Findings for RQ1 39
4.2 SQ1: What factors regularly motivate these teachers? 41
4.2.1 Age and Experience Factors 41
4.2.2 Students 43
4.2.3 The English Language and Related Subjects 45
4.2.4 Holidays 45
4.2.5 Salary/Pay 46
4.2.6 Insecurity and the Covid-19 Pandemic 47
4.2.7 Overall Findings for SQ1 47
4.3 SQ2: Why do Slovak teachers choose to teach the English language? 47
4.3.1 Family Influence - Teachers in the Family 47
4.3.2 Love of the English Language 48
4.3.3 Other Influences 49
4.3.4 Vocation 49
4.3.5 Overall Findings for SQ2: 49
4.4 SQ3: What keeps these L2 teachers in their work? 50
4.4.1 Surviving the First Year 50
4.4.2 Love of the English Language 50
4.4.3 The Students 51
4.4.4 Vision 51
4.4.5 Overall findings for SQ3: 56
4.5 Study Limitations and Ethical Considerations 56
Conclusion 59
References: 61
Appendix A: CUREC Approval Email 66
Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet 67
Appendix C: Participant Consent Form 69

Abstract

This research study investigated the changing language teacher motivation of nine Slovak English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers at a private, bilingual university preparation school in Bratislava, Slovakia. The aim of the research was to better understand why these teachers chose to teach and what factors in their work motivated or demotivated them over the course of the 2021-2022 school year.

For this research, a qualitative, longitudinal design was used to examine the nine participants in a multiple case study. The participants were asked to fill in journal entries regarding their motivation at the beginning of each month from October 2021 to June 2022. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with them in October, March, and June of that school year to add more details to the data from the journals. Thematic analysis and magnitude coding were then used to examine their changes in motivation, what factors affected their motivation, why they chose to become teachers, and why they are still in the profession.

The findings of this research are that all nine teacher participants experienced varying levels of motivation throughout the year, though there was a noticeable difference between their levels at the beginning of the school year compared to the end. The principal factors affecting their motivation included their age and teaching experience, student interest in the classes, and interaction with students. The effect of vision (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014) on these teachers' motivation is assessed in this work, in particular in two of the highlighted case studies.

List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: Research Questions 22
Table 2: Journal Questions 27
Table 3: Sample Questions from Interview 1 28
Table 4: Questions from Interviews 2 and 3 29
Table 5: First Journal Analysis 33
Table 6: Second Journal Analysis 35

Figure 1: Line Graph Showing the Changes in LTM 37

Chapter 1: Introduction

Slovakia is a small country in the heart of Europe with a rich cultural history and a relatively new history as a nation-state. It split peacefully with the Czech Republic in 1993, later joining the European Union (EU) in 2004 and adopting the euro as its currency in 2009. However, compared with its neighbouring countries, its population is low, at around 5.4 million people (Central Intelligence Agency, 2022). Having lived and taught in Slovakia for over eight years, I have come to know the Slovak context and part of its educational system well. For this dissertation, I knew that I wanted to research something in the educational sector of this central European country and I decided to explore the motivation of Slovaks who work as teachers of English in a private, bilingual high school.

1.1 Slovakia's Educational System

Slovakia has a free public education system where schooling is compulsory from the ages of 6 to 15. It has about a dozen universities, some of which are state-run, and there are a variety of high schools for students to choose from (Zamarelli, 2020). Some secondary schools include vocational or technical schools and what are called *gymnasia*, a type of university prep school (Kubanyiova, 2007). Some of those university prep schools are private, and they receive money from the state and tuition, which afford them more resources for students and higher wages for teachers. This latter type of institution is where I work as an English teacher and where I, therefore, chose to conduct my study.

1.2 Language Teacher Motivation (LTM) in Slovakia

When choosing a topic for this dissertation, I wanted to select one that would benefit the people I work with, the system I work in, and myself as a teacher. There were many intriguing topics, but I found motivation to be what attracted me most. Knowing first-hand how draining teaching can be, I was curious as to why other teachers chose this profession, what keeps them there long-term, and how they maintain their motivation over time. Slovak news sites like RTVS paint a grim picture of the declining number of teachers in Slovakia, stating that this school year (2022- 2023), the educational system expects a shortage of around 1300 teachers compared to the year before (Prochazka, 2022). That article from RTVS then cites the Slovak

Institute of Educational Policy (IVP), which is part of the Ministry of Education. The IVP calculates that by 2025, the number of empty teaching positions will be over 8000 (Prochazka, 2022; Ministerstvo, Organizácie Ministerstva [Ministry, Organisations of the Ministry], n.d.). Because Slovakia has a growing shortage of teachers, it is vital to investigate and assess topics like motivation to see what can benefit teachers and the whole education system.

I was also inspired to pursue motivation as a topic after taking the Individual and Group Differences in Language Learning course at the University of Oxford with Dr Heath Rose. While reading Dörnyei and Ryan's (2015) chapter on motivation and working through the assignments, I learned that language teacher motivation is still relatively understudied, especially compared to language learning motivation (p. 101). This topic of motivation intrigued me, and I was particularly keen to investigate the lives of teachers because teacher motivation is arguably less explored than student motivation, and teaching is a subject that I am passionate about.

This study will explore the motivation levels of nine Slovak teachers of English at a private, bilingual high school in Bratislava, Slovakia, as well as factors that affect their motivation. This choice of context was fortunate because much of the writings I found helpful during my preparation for this came from Magdalena Kubanyiova, who has written extensively on LTM. In 2006, she published a paper on the difficulties of motivating teachers to implement change in their teaching practices (Kubanyiova, 2006). She conducted this research in Slovakia and focused on a select group of people. Her research helped inform my ideas, especially that of motivational theory. Therefore, in this dissertation, I will approach the study from the perspective of LTM and vision, inspired by Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014).

1.3 Research Questions:

This study explored one overarching research question (RQ) by way of three sub questions:

RQ1: How does Slovak EFL teachers' motivation change over a school year?

These three questions are subsidiary (SQs) to the main RQ above:

SQ1: What factors regularly motivate these teachers?

SQ2: Why do these teachers choose to teach the English language?

SQ3: What keeps these L2 teachers in their work?

1.4 Overview of the Dissertation

This dissertation will begin with a literature review chapter that briefly explains theories related to LTM, particularly those connected with language teacher vision. The review will then explore relevant research regarding language teacher motivation, specifically emphasising studies that come from Europe, involve secondary education teachers, and observe motivation in longitudinal studies.

In the next chapter, I will outline the methodology I used to prepare the study, collect the data, and analyse what I found. Then, I will explain the process of choosing the study design and analysis.

The following chapter will first explain the results of my analysis and what I discovered while listening to and reading through the data from my participants. There will be integrated discussion throughout. I will answer my research question and three sub questions and discuss the overall findings. That chapter will also summarise the study's possible limitations and ethical considerations.

In the final chapter, I will conclude by connecting my findings to the overall motivation research and offering some ideas for potential future research in the Slovak context and beyond.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

In second language acquisition (SLA), motivation is one of the individual and group differences researchers gravitate towards in their work. Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) explain the importance of motivation among language learners. They argue that this individual difference is essential for beginning the language learning process and pressing on when it becomes tiring. This focus on language *learners* in motivation research is essential, but we cannot forget the teachers. A growing area of research in SLA is language *teacher* motivation. Sahakyan, Lamb, and Chambers (2018) define teacher motivation as "a driving force that initiates pedagogic action and guides an individual to fulfil and maintain their desired teacher self" (p. 56). This "driving force" will be explored more in this literature review.

Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) maintain that "…transforming classrooms into engaging environments for language learning demands more than a repertoire of innovative principles and techniques – it requires teachers who will be motivated to put the knowledge into practice" (p. 123). Therefore, schools must find and nurture motivated teachers so that the students and the school can thrive. Arnold (2020) echoes this point by arguing that motivated language teachers create healthy learning environments in the classroom, empathise with their students' learning process, and build those students into more confident users of the language. To develop teachers who fulfil that purpose rather than losing teachers from the system due to burnout, Arnold claims that educational systems need to consider teachers' psychology and emotions. Teachers' well-being is another factor I will examine in this paper.

Regarding language teacher motivation research, Kubanyiova (2019) wrote a summary of the progress of research into language teacher motivation (LTM), highlighting that though it is not as popular in research as language learner motivation, it still is a topic of focus. Kubanyiova mentions an article by Savignon (1976), in which Savignon contends that researchers must pay more attention to the attitudes and motivation of teachers, those "on the other side of the desk" (p. 295). Additionally, Dörnyei (2003) argued almost two decades ago that there was little research on language teacher motivation, something that educational psychology and second language acquisition (SLA) needed to remedy. However, much research has been done since then, as Kubanyiova (2019) wrote and as the studies in this review will demonstrate.

This review of the existing literature will focus on LTM studies that present us with theories and practical implications. Many studies will be from European and secondary school contexts to compare the findings with this current study's findings. First, I will examine the various LTM studies and their chosen theories. Then I will go into more detail regarding language teacher vision (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014).

2.1 Language Teacher Motivation Definitions

Before addressing theory, it is essential to explain how motivation is understood and viewed in this paper. Because motivation concerns human behaviour and choices, it is a complex concept. Hiver, Kim, and Kim (2018) argued that although researchers may define motivation (and specifically *teacher* motivation) differently, they agree that it "is complex with interconnected personal, relational, experiential, affective and contextual layers" (p 18). One of the older definitions of *motivation* is that of Dörnyei and Ottó (1998).

> In a general sense, motivation can be defined as the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritised, operationalised and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out (p. 65).

Recently, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021) updated the definition and phrased it more clearly. They acknowledged that motivation is difficult to define because people's understanding is likely to differ. However, Dörnyei and Ushioda remark that researchers appear to agree on at least a few factors that make up motivation. They say,

> it, by definition, concerns the direction and magnitude of human behaviour; that is, the choice of a particular action; the persistence with it; the effort expended on it… motivation is responsible for why people decide to do something; how long they are willing to sustain the activity; how hard they are going to pursue it. (Ch. 1, sect. 1 para 3)

Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021) continued the above quote by giving examples of the meanings of motivation, such as one's purpose for doing something, a more consistent character trait (e.g., this or that person is very motivated), what we do to motivate ourselves or others to succeed, etc. Their explanation of motivation is something that directs our behaviour, effort, and

persistence. Coupling Dörnyei and Ushioda's (2021) ideas with Sahakyan et al.'s (2018, p. 56) definition of teacher motivation as a "driving force" gives us a starting point from which to examine teacher motivation as a concept in SLA.

2.2 Language Teacher Motivation Theories

This section will outline some fundamental motivational theories that informed my findings regarding LTM. Because there are many existing motivational theories, this literature review will highlight a few that focus on teachers' views of themselves in the present and the future. Those theories include the expectancy-value theory (e.g., Watt & Richardson 2007, 2008), possible selves theory (Markus & Nurius, 1986), self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987), emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983), and motivation and vision (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014).

2.2.1 Expectancy-Value Theory and the FIT-Choice Model

In chapter seven of their most recent edition of *Teaching and Researching Motivation*, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021) focused on how teacher motivation affects student motivation. Though they recognised the importance of existing motivational theories, they argued for a more multidimensional approach that accounted for the external societal and contextual factors that affect teachers' well-being. Those factors include teachers' professional status, career paths, and working conditions. Furthermore, because Dörnyei and Ushioda updated this volume after the Covid-19 pandemic had already affected the world for over a year, they included the pandemic in the list of factors that add stress to teachers' lives. Finally, they expressed a desire to study LTM as it differs from general teacher motivation. They noted that the same has been done for language *learning* motivation and would be essential to consider for LTM research.

One of SLA's popular motivation theories and models is the expectancy-value theory (e.g., Watt & Richardson 2007, 2008). Watt and Richardson developed an expectancy-value model called the Factors Influencing Teaching Choice (FIT-Choice) model (2007), which accounts for factors including prior teaching experience, perceived teaching ability, "personal utility value" (e.g., job security), "social utility value" (i.e., contributions to society), etc. (p. 176). The FIT-Choice Model is a type of questionnaire that uses 57 items to explore those

factors, and its purpose is to provide researchers with a way to investigate why teachers choose their profession in the first place.

In a study in Australia the following year, Watt and Richardson (2008) analysed the career choices of 493 graduating Australian teachers using the FIT-Choice model. Based on their findings, they organised their participants into three groups: "highly engaged persisters," "highly engaged switchers," and "lower engaged desistors" (p. 416). The former was the group that had the highest ratings for these four factors regarding teaching: planned effort, planned persistence, professional development aspirations, and leadership aspirations. The highly engaged switchers were similar to the first group except for a significantly lower score in planned persistence. In contrast, the last group gave significantly lower ratings on all four factors.

Though these studies were not specific to language teacher motivation, some LTM researchers have employed the FIT-Choice model for their research purposes. That model accounts for the complexity of human behaviour and allows for a more in-depth assessment of the different possible types of teachers.

2.2.2 Possible Selves, Self-Discrepancy Theory, and the Feasible Self

In 1986, Markus and Nurius outlined a new psychological theory called *possible selves*. This theory suggests that people have possible future selves that change how they behave and view the world and themselves. Those "possible selves" take the form of what people fear becoming, what they hope to become, and what they might become in the future. Higgins (1987) expounded upon this idea when he explained *self-discrepancy theory* and referred to people's *actual self*, the self they conceive themselves to be at the present moment and their *ideal self*, which is one of the possible selves written above. Higgins also defined another possible self as the *ought* or the *ought-to self*, which affects our choices and behaviour.

In a study whose methodology is similar to this dissertation, Sahakyan et al. (2018) considered language teacher motivation and possible selves theory (Markus & Nurius, 1986) in a new light – that of teachers' *feasible* selves. The idea was to explore feasible selves from the perspective of post-Soviet Armenian teachers of English who worked in universities. They were curious about the change in motivation over time. Though their qualitative study involved six

teachers of varying ages and experience, they chose two teachers in particular for analysis. One of them was an Armenian British man who had moved to Armenia; the other was a female Armenian still living there. These two teachers grew up in different countries, and their teaching experiences showed some apparent differences, but they still wrestled with what was expected of them and what they wished to accomplish as teachers.

Sahakyan et al.'s (2018) findings from this study are that those two teachers began their teaching career with an understanding of their possible selves – ought-to, feared, and ideal – but gradually abandoned or accepted different versions of them because of various reasons, including the possibility of failure. Sahakyan et al. contend that for teachers to hold onto possible future selves, they need to perceive them as available and accessible, or as they phrase it, *feasible*. Moreover, the researchers' issue with possible selves theory (Markus & Nurius, 1986, Higgins, 1987) is that teachers need to *combine* their feared, ideal, and ought-to selves in a feasible way rather than acknowledging them separately. They claim that teachers' future selves must be both available and accessible, which is the key to motivation. If language teachers can imagine themselves accomplishing tasks and improving their teaching skills step by step, their future selves are attainable (Sahakyan et al., 2018, p. 63).

In the Korean context, Hiver (2013) added to the empirical research on possible language teacher selves with a mixed-methods study that investigated how those possible selves affected the choices that their seven primary and secondary school teacher participants made regarding their professional development. Their findings showed which factors motivated the teachers to participate in various professional development opportunities. Three incentives stood out, including teachers feeling they needed to fix their inadequacies, strengthen what they already did well, and follow what was expected of them by others. Those incentives connect directly to the feared self, the ideal self, and the ought-to self.

2.2.3 Continuing the Research - Acts of Imagination

Along with the work on possible and feasible selves, Kubanyiova (2019) wrote a chapter on the various theoretical perspectives in LTM research and explained how she believes the research will proceed in the future. One of Kubanyiova's main arguments is that researchers should explore how various theories and approaches can support each other. She argues that a

transdisciplinary perspective combines and encourages ideas from disciplines such as SLA, sociolinguistics, psychology, and others. She promotes more holistic and interdisciplinary research so that our understanding of LTM has more depth than before.

An essential part of Kubanyiova's (2019) work is the section where she provides three conceptual metaphors we can use to study LTM: complexity, figured worlds, and acts of imagination. She uses *complexity* more metaphorically, saying that it is a way of thinking about LTM openly, "inviting multiple and varied theoretical iterations" (p. 395). At the same time, her term *acts of imagination* means that teachers see their future selves through their imagination, which is constantly evolving and affecting their work. Finally, *figured worlds* is a term that first came from Holland, Lachicotte Jr, Skinner, and Cain (2001); they explain it as "people's abilities to form and be formed in collectively realised 'as if' realms" (p. 49). Kubanyiova (2019) claims these three theories could help bridge the gap between disciplines/approaches in this research. She acknowledges the importance of the psychological approach to teacher motivation and that of the more critical and sociolinguistic perspectives. Moreover, she argues that the three theories can help connect the differing views.

In particular, acts of imagination is one of the theoretical perspectives I will investigate in this study. Kubanyiova (2019) described acts of imagination as teachers envisioning the "evolving images of their future selves" (p. 399) as they work in their various teaching positions. The crucial part of this perspective is that these imaginings are still connected to the present and actual actions of the teachers in their daily class activities and tasks. The idea is to approach teachers' growth and motivation in a specific and practical way. It is putting each teacher's teaching into context and understanding better how that affects their motivation and that of their students.

2.2.4 Emotional Labour

Another theoretical perspective I draw from in this dissertation is that of *emotional labour*. Hochschild (1983) describes emotion/emotional labour as the expectation of professional working people to manage their "feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display" (p. 7). Acheson, Taylor, and Luna (2016) added to the research on burnout and emotional labour amongst foreign language teachers, which they claim has not been studied

nearly enough compared to students' emotions. They explored the emotional labour of a rural school's foreign language (FL) department, which included five teachers. The researchers used individual, semi-structured interviews to allow them to provide as much detail as they felt comfortable sharing since emotion as a topic is quite a personal one. In addition, the researchers used thematic analysis to analyse the data. The findings include a list of five key insights into the emotional labour of their participants:

1. There is insufficient community support for foreign language departments in their U.S. American and rural South context.
2. There is an overwhelming burden placed upon FL teachers to motivate their students to learn languages. The teachers in that study described how they perceive foreign language study to be the subject in which their students are least motivated.
3. The participants performed much emotional labour to attempt to motivate their students.
4. Because of spending so much energy on emotional labour to motivate their students, the teachers sometimes reached a point of emotional exhaustion and felt they did not have much left to give.
5. All of the previous four factors led to teachers viewing themselves negatively regarding their work abilities and therefore going into a "downward spiral" (p. 531). Altogether, these themes suggest that there is a cost to emotional labour and that it is very much connected to FL language teachers' motivation to work.

Acheson et al.'s (2016) study also implied that teaching foreign languages has unique challenges compared to other subjects.

2.2.5 Language Teacher Vision

Though the theories mentioned above connect to the work of this dissertation, the work that arguably, influenced the planning and writing of this dissertation the most is that of Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014). Their book focuses on changing how learners and teachers envision themselves in the language classroom. Though most of the book focuses on learners, the last quarter looks specifically at teachers and their motivation. The theory they build upon is that of desired language selves, arguing that *vision* is the vital missing ingredient in many teachers' lower motivation levels. By *vision*, Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) refer to a "fairly

homogenous" meaning, "capturing three defining aspects: (1) the *future*, (2) the *ideal* and (3) the *desire for deliberate change*" (p. 9).

Teaching language teachers how to have that vision has to start, Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) contend, with "igniting, or if necessary re-igniting, the flame of teacher vision" and how that is "the single most important step in any motivational agenda for language teachers" (p. 125). Their proposed plan to start igniting that vision is by encouraging teachers to recognise their gifts, re-examine and learn from past experiences as learners, and remember what got them into teaching in the first place. Additionally, they add that teachers must discover and recognise their values and morals and how those affect their approach to teaching. All these steps should lead to the final stages at the beginning of finding one's vision: forming the images of teachers' ideal selves and "sparking creative tension" (p. 138). As such, teachers need to be pushed out of their comfort zones and forced to face some dissonance between who they are at the moment and who they want to become. Otherwise, teachers will not make a change, as Kubanyiova (2012) discovered in her research of Slovak teachers and how they did or did not implement what they had learned in training. There must be both vision and a challenge to effect change.

Another essential step in language teacher vision is what Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) called "guarding the flame of teacher vision" (p. 145). By this, they meant maintaining a connection to the original vision teachers set for themselves despite the pressure to change their ought-to self-images to please others. They maintained that teachers should own their vision and that it should not come from other people. To achieve this purpose, Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) offered the idea of "safety zones" and "vision boosters" (p. 147-150). The former refers to working with groups of people who support each other's visions. The researchers acknowledged that many teaching contexts do not automatically offer those spaces, but they argued that creating them with colleagues and friends is possible. In addition, vision boosters are any image or activity that helps reinforce an existing vision. Dörnyei and Kubanyiova explained that teachers who remind themselves of who they are and why they teach are more likely to maintain that ideal vision of themselves, something that this project has potentially done in the lives of the participants of this current dissertation. Teachers who are asked to think about their motivation and vision for the future may be more likely to do so more often.

Finally, Kubanyiova (2014) argued that to inspire those images and vision of their ideal teacher selves, teachers need to have a better understanding of *who* they are (gifts and experience), *why* they do what they do (bigger purpose), and what their *image*, or "visual representation of their desired teaching selves" is (p. 77)

2.3 Language Teacher Motivation Studies

In this section, I will discuss studies in which researchers explored language teacher motivation, particularly regarding teachers' possible selves and career vision. I have chosen studies which have similar features to my current study, be that geographical context (countries in Europe), school levels (secondary/high schools), or research methodology (longitudinal studies, semi-structured interviews, and diaries/journals).

2.3.1 Motivation to Begin Teaching - Pre-Service Teachers

In a research study in China, Zhang, Wu, and Zhu (2020) looked at foreign language teaching, in this case, teaching Chinese as a second language (CSL). Their goal was to understand why pre-service CSL teachers chose second language teaching as a profession and what their motivations were. The participants comprised 411 teachers who filled out a FIT-Choice (Watt & Richardson 2007) questionnaire (see questionnaire discussion above). Zhang et al. found that the strength of their participants' motivations was intrinsic, cross-cultural, and altruistic, but not as much extrinsic motivation. This study's various background variables that affected these teachers' motivations are of interest to this study. Zhang et al. claim that based on their findings, age, family income, and how often the teachers had contact with foreigners all made a difference in how motivated the teachers were.

2.3.2 In-Service Teachers – Vision and Context

One example of a study where researchers explored language teacher vision as connected to motivation is that of Rahmati, Sadeghi, and Ghaderi (2019). They conducted their research in Iran using semi-structured interviews and a follow-up questionnaire. Furthermore, their chosen participants were Iranian in-service teachers working at state schools. Ten of their 221 teachers sat for interviews, and the other 211 completed the questionnaire. The questions centred on

vision and what kind of teachers the participants considered themselves to be, whom they hoped to become, and whom they feared becoming.

Rahmati et al.'s (2019) findings demonstrated a need for a clearer teacher vision, as the results of their data suggest that their participants did not have a set vision or a complete vision which includes all of the parts of possible future selves (ideal, actual, ought-to, and feared). What stands out about their analysis is their "vision typology" for L2 teachers, which includes four types: visionary, partially visionary, vision-compromised, and non-visionary (p. 469-470). Rahmati et al. created these typologies not to assign teachers to one or the other but to show that teachers' moods and behaviour are fluid and that changes in time or context affect that. Moreover, they contend that if teachers have a better-developed vision with all parts of the self–ideal, ought-to, and feared–the "motivational potential of vision" (p. 471) will be much higher.

Finally, some contextual factors negatively impacted Rahmati et al.'s (2019) teacher participants' motivation. These included low salaries, students' lack of learning success, disinterest in the subject or classes, and crowded classrooms.

Thompson (2021) wrote a book about the importance of context in teachers' motivation levels and *self*-development. She used a narrative-based qualitative approach to ask non-native English language teachers in various contexts about their teaching career, their role in the classroom, and their context. One of Thompson's arguments was that language teachers who work in their own national or local contexts bring a lot to the table regarding their knowledge, training, and sense of identity as teachers. For her study, Thompson interviewed ten participants from seven countries who were living and working in their own countries as teachers of English. Her findings were that her ten participants had ideal teacher selves and that those selves were connected to their context and a part of their language teacher motivation. Thompson also found that her participants did not see their non-native status as a weakness but as a strength.

2.3.3 Motivation and Quality of Work Life

In a study investigating how language teacher motivation and the quality of teachers' work life are connected, Baleghizadeh and Gordani (2012) utilised a questionnaire and follow-up interviews with English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Iran. The quality of work life

questionnaire (developed by Walton, 1973) was first given to 160 secondary school teachers from Iranian public schools. Later, the researchers interviewed 30 questionnaire participants, discussing their feelings about teaching, work life, and the rationale for their responses. The participant's questionnaires yielded results that showed that they viewed their quality of work life at a medium level, with opportunities to grow in their careers as the lowest category level. Furthermore, the participants' perceptions of their motivation levels revealed that they consider their motivation medium to low regarding their work. Baleghizadeh and Gordani (2012) also found a positive relationship between quality of work life and motivation, though they concede that there is no clearly defined causality between them. Studies like this show the importance of external factors and their effect on language teacher motivation levels.

2.3.4 Motivational and Demotivational Factors

In Poland, one of Slovakia's neighbouring countries, Stężycka and Etherington (2020) conducted a study of LTM amongst secondary school teachers, which is similar to this dissertation. The research questions addressed the factors that motivate and demotivate EFL teachers working in secondary schools in Poland, along with the current motivation level of said teachers. Their mixed-methods study used a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with six of the study's participants. What they found in answer to their first research question was that most of these Polish teachers' motivational factors were intrinsic. Those factors include "seeing my students' success/progress," "developing my student's English language skills," "trying not to become what I believe is a bad teacher," and "having a job where I can do what I love" (p. 10). Furthermore, the follow-up interviews supported those findings by adding more details to clarify the participants' position on what factors most motivate them, such as satisfaction in passing on what they have learned to their students or helping them succeed in a competition.

Regarding their second research question, which investigated the least motivating factors, Stężycka and Etherington (2020) discovered that their participants rated contributing to their world and society near the bottom of the list of factors. However, Stężycka and Etherington noted that the participants rated making a difference in their students' lives much higher. Therefore, they argued that service did matter to those teachers.

Other demotivating factors they found appeared in their analysis of their third research question, where they examined their participants' motivation levels. Because these Polish teachers are not satisfied with their salary and are overwhelmed with their workload, their LTM is "only moderately positive and satisfactory" (p. 16). As a result, they recommend higher wages and teacher development programmes that could raise Polish teachers' job satisfaction and motivation. Though the researchers admit that their small number of participants means they cannot generalise their findings, they encourage other researchers to explore these ideas further and in similar contexts, which I will do in this paper.

2.4 Connecting the Literature to this Study

The motivational levels of my nine Slovak EFL teachers will be explored in this dissertation through the lens of possible selves' theory, emotional labour, and teacher vision. The previously mentioned studies give some examples of how motivation has been studied thus far and also emphasise the importance of further research into this topic.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This qualitative case study was longitudinal and carried out over ten months. I asked ten of my colleagues to participate in the study, collected their monthly journal entries, and conducted three interviews per teacher at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year to measure the motivation levels of native Slovak teachers of English in Bratislava, Slovakia.

The process for choosing my research methods and study design began in the first year of this degree when we were taking a Research Methods course. I chose a qualitative design rather than a mixed-methods one because I wanted to focus my efforts on the case study aspect of the research. The reasons I chose a longitudinal rather than cross-sectional design were two-fold. Firstly, as Woodrow (2015) claims in Paltridge and Phakiti's book *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*, in motivational research, cross-sectional studies are common because the researchers can acquire data from a larger group of people more easily. Woodrow also says that researchers often use quantitative data like questionnaires, which require self-report data from the participants. Therefore, I chose this type of study because I wished to approach the research from a different angle than the norm. Secondly, I had access to a specific set of teachers in a particular context and knew I could gather data to help answer my research questions. I wanted to concentrate on a small group of people, so I chose a qualitative, longitudinal study design.

3.1 Research Questions

I set out to answer the following research questions (Table 1).

Research Questions		**Data Collection Tools**	**Analysis**
RQ1:	How does these language teachers' motivation change over a school year?	Journal/diary entries and semi-structured interviews	Magnitude coding
SQ1:	What factors regularly motivate these teachers?		Coding and thematic analysis
SQ 2:	Why do Slovak teachers choose to teach the English language?		
SQ 3:	What keeps these L2 teachers in their work?		

Table 1: Research Questions

3.2 Study Design

I chose a qualitative multiple-case study design for this project. I based my decision on the nature of case studies and my desire to concentrate on in-depth research on a few people rather than many participants. This viewpoint led me to case studies. Casanave (2015) defines a case study like this:

It is an approach in which the object of inquiry is set in a natural context, is unique (in the sense of singular) and bounded. It is also an approach in which the researcher's interest is in an in-depth investigation of the particular rather than the general. (p. 119)

Such an approach appealed to me because I experienced it first-hand. In my first two years of teaching, I blogged once a month, using that as a public journal to process my time in another country. Putting my experiences onto paper helped me remember what I had learned. I am hopeful that this study will similarly affect my participants and readers. Case studies are a way of observing and learning from others' stories.

The main focus of this study is on the changes in language teacher motivation in the case of these nine Slovak teachers of English. Initially, I wanted to investigate motivation and identity. Still, after exploring the topic further, I decided to focus my efforts on motivation, though I also began the process with questions regarding identity. After deciding on my final research questions, I specifically analysed the data regarding motivation.

3.2.1 Participants

At the beginning of my research, I asked ten of my colleagues to participate in this study of their motivation levels. Nine of the ten participants who agreed to participate completed the study. Unfortunately, the tenth had to drop out of the study for personal reasons. Because of this and poor audio quality, her data was not part of the analysed data.

The remaining nine participants are all native Slovak speakers born and raised in Slovakia. They are between the ages of 28 and 51 and have been teaching English for six to 25 years as of the end of this year. All of the Slovak teachers of English at the participating school are female, so there were no possible male participants with the same cultural, linguistic, and

pedagogical backgrounds. The all-female group of participants was another factor in choosing a multiple-case study, as I could not apply what I learned from their responses across multiple contexts. Still, I can glean meaningful information from a case study of their lives.

3.2.2 Pilot Study

I conducted a pilot study with three of my colleagues to ascertain how the participants would respond to the journals and the interviews. I sent them an email with the sample journal questions on September 27, 2021, and, once they had responded to those emails, I conducted their interviews October 7-10. The three colleagues who participated in the pilot study were not part of the main study because they are foreign teachers of English from the U.S.A. and Ireland and therefore did not fit into the multiple case study requirements. However, they are colleagues of the primary participants and have worked at that same school and lived in Slovakia for at least a year, so they could also reflect on motivational changes as teachers of English. A potential limitation of the study, because they are native speakers of English, is that their answers were bound to be different from those of the primary participants. Their background provided an advantage, though, as they could speak to the wording of the questions and give me feedback on whether the questions made sense or if there was something I had forgotten.

One key question in my interviews came from a pilot interview with an American teacher named Janet (pseudonym)[1]. She suggested I add a question about the Covid-19 situation and how it affected their motivation levels. Henry, another American teacher, also gave me helpful feedback on my interview technique. In contrast, our Irish teacher, Sean, questioned the breadth of the journal questions, wondering if they should be more specific. Altogether, they thoroughly answered the journals and interview questions and helped prepare me for the interviews.

3.2.3 CUREC and Consent Forms

Before beginning any data collection, I prepared CUREC, participant information, and participant consent forms with the advice of my supervisors and sent those in for approval in August 2021. I received the CUREC approval on September 2, 2021(see Appendix A).

[1] Throughout this study, any names that I use for the participants are all pseudonyms.

After completing that process, I gathered my participants and explained the research purpose and procedure. Next, I gave them the information sheet and consent forms (see Appendices) per the CUREC guidelines. They all agreed to sign the forms, after which I stored those in a locked cabinet in my office. I also gave the same forms and a similar explanation to my pilot study participants, though I told them they would only complete one journal and interview each.

3.2.4 Instruments

I utilised two instruments in this study: journals/diaries and semi-structured interviews. My purpose in choosing those two is outlined below.

3.2.4.1 Journals

For these case studies, I wanted to begin with journals to help my participants and me reflect on their changes and factors in motivation. When I studied abroad for one year in university, I was tasked with a monthly update journal to give an account of the new programme my university had joined. Looking back at that journal at the end of my programme gave me material to help assess the programme and understand my own experience. Furthermore, I was inspired to use journals/diaries after reading chapter 7 of Rose, McKinley, and Baffoe-Djan's (2020) book on data collection methods. In that chapter, Rose et al. argue that journals are not used enough in data collection and are a tool that researchers should not discount. Bolger, Davis, and Rafaeli (2003) wrote that one of the research goals that well-designed journals can achieve is how people change over time, as well as the individual differences between the study participants. The title of their article, "Diary Methods: Capturing Life as it is Lived," describes well the goal of my study. I wished to capture at least a piece of the lives and stories of my participants.

3.2.4.1.1 Types of Journals

Rose et al. (2020) differentiate between the often interchanged journals, diaries, and logs, defining journals as "the generic term to refer to any document which records specific activities and events, usually at a pre-established time to maintain a record for later use" (Ch.. 7, sect. 2, para. 3). More specifically, a diary is "a self-opinionated record, which can contain one's

thoughts, reflections, moods and emotions and is written in the author's own time and usually by their own volition" (Ch. 7, sect. 2, para 4). On the other hand, a log is "a more constrained version of a journal, which often collects only specific information, usually in the form of numbers or words in predefined categories" (Ch. 7, sect. 2, para 5).

In keeping with these definitions, I opted for a journal/diary mixture. My participants were given the same three questions at the beginning of each month but were encouraged to give more of a diary response explaining in as many words as they wished how they felt and what they thought. There was structure but not too much constraint. Because these terms are sometimes used interchangeably, I will do the same in this paper.

Of the three types of design that Rose et al. (2020) identify - interval contingent designs, signal contingent designs, and event-contingent designs – I chose a style that is somewhat of a mixture between *interval contingent* and *signal contingent*. The third type, *event-contingent*, would have been interesting to use, as the participants would need to write in a journal whenever something particularly demotivating or motivating happened, but that would have required much more of the participants. I do not think they would have wanted to continue. *Interval contingent means* that participants must write an entry at a set time, and *signal contingent* means writing when signalled. Because I wished to examine the teachers' changes in motivation over a year, I sent them a journal through a monthly survey. I did not require them to remember to fill in the diary entry but to respond to the emailed survey at the beginning of each month. Therefore, the journals/diaries they wrote were a mixture of interval and signal contingent.

One of the potential limitations of these journal entries was what Bolger et al. (2003) wrote about - retrospection bias. As they explained in their work, factors such as mood or motivation may be challenging for people to remember, especially over a long period. However, I still chose monthly entries because I did not wish to overburden my participants with weekly journals, which they would probably not be motivated to complete.

3.2.4.1.2 Journal Procedure and Questions

So that I protected the journal entries and could quickly analyse, download, and organise them, I accepted the advice of my supervisors. I used the Qualtrics (2022) website to send

surveys through a protected email list. At the beginning of each month, I sent a link with the new survey for that month, which was four slides long. The first slide contained these instructions:

> In answering each of these questions, please describe your thoughts and observations in as much detail as you can remember. If you have any questions or comments, you can leave them in the space below. This is for the month of **May.**
>
> Also, please remember that once you click past the third question, you will be unable to return to the survey. Thank you!

The following three slides contained the journal questions and a place to input their answers, which could be as long or as short as they wished. Because of the changing nature of motivation, I instructed my participants to fill out a monthly journal consisting of three questions each time (see Table 2).

Journal Questions:
Question 1: In this past month, what were some situations in your work where you felt motivated? Please describe at least one situation in detail.
Question 2: In this past month, what were some situations at work where you felt demotivated? Please describe at least one situation in detail.
Question 3: In those situations of motivation or demotivation, what factors influenced your motivation levels? Feel free to choose one (motivation or demotivation) or respond to both.

Table 2: Journal Questions

3.2.4.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

The other instrument I utilised in this study was semi-structured interviews. Rose et al. (2020) described the benefits of interviews in qualitative research, explaining that interviews give researchers the possibility of asking for additional information or clarification. Furthermore, they add that *structured* and *semi-structured* interviews (as opposed to *unstructured* interviews, which have no set plan) have the advantage of prepared questions to guide the conversation.

However, their disadvantage is the possible lack of time to explore further beyond the set questions. Semi-structured interviews have the advantage of being a bit of both. There is a framework to work within but also "some degree of reflexivity to explore topics in varying depths and in varying order for each interviewee" (Ch. 6, sect. 3, para 4). This type of interview was ideal for my study because I wanted the structure to compare motivation between participants and the freedom to explore more specific details.

I began with the pilot interviews from October 7-10, 2021, and then continued with the scheduled interviews from Oct 12-25, after the participants had completed their first September journal entries. I used a Google Sheets spreadsheet to schedule the interviews to organise 45-minute time slots for the first interviews. I knew that the first set of interviews would take longer than the following two because I had additional background questions (see Table 3).

Sample 1st Interview Questions:
Question 1: How many years have you been teaching?
Question 2: In which schools and institutions have you taught?
Question 3: What English subjects/classes do you teach?
Question 4: What degree do you have? Where did you study to obtain it?
Question 5: What was the process of choosing to study pedagogy like?/How did your journey to becoming a teacher begin?
Question 6: How long do you expect or hope to teach?

Table 3: Sample Questions from Interview 1

While the first round of interviews lasted between 37 and 65 minutes (M = 47.89, SD = 7.54), the second and third sets were shorter. After consulting my supervisors, I reassessed my questions, dropping some of them, combining others into more concise questions, and focusing on the future, according to Dornyei and Kubanyiova's (2014) book about vision. Part of this was because I focused specifically on motivation and not identity. Therefore, the second set of

interviews ranged from 18 to 39 minutes (M = 30.22, SD = 7.07) and the final interviews from 18 to 29 (M = 22.44 , SD = 3.36).

I conducted the second and third interviews using the questions from Table 4.

2nd and 3rd Interview Questions:
Question 1: How motivated do you feel in your teaching at this point in the school year?
Question 2: What were the most motivating and demotivating factors you wrote about in your journal?
Question 3: If you could change one thing to better motivate you, what would it be?
Question 4: What do you think would help improve your motivation in the times when it is the lowest?
Question 5: How did the Covid-19 situation/the various lockdowns affect your motivation this school year?
Question 6: What vision do you have for your future career? (Or how do you imagine yourself if you think of your work life in 1, 2… 5, 10, or 15 years?)
Question 7: Is there anything else you want to add? Anything you did not get to say?

Table 4: Questions from Interviews 2 and 3

For each interview, to protect their privacy, ensure good sound quality, and prevent data loss, I sat down with each person in a quiet study/testing room at their workplace. I used two recording devices to capture the audio. I practised this during the pilot interviews and tested the audio devices with the main participants. As to the devices themselves, I purchased a voice recorder for the main audio recordings. As a backup, I also used the voice memo application on my PIN-protected smartphone, from which I deleted them after securely saving them on the University of Oxford's Nexus page.

One of the difficulties I encountered in this process occurred as the school year became busy with testing and activities. I found it complicated to conduct the check-in interviews promptly, which could have affected the teachers' changes in response. However, they all happened after the first semester had ended, from February 21 to March 21, 2022. Though it took

a month, one week of that month was Spring Break, necessitating some manoeuvring in scheduling. Though the end of the school year was also busy, I conducted the final interviews from June 21 to July 6. Some of them lasted only about 20 minutes. There was one exception – one of the teachers left to go on maternity leave in early May, so we had to be flexible and finalise her data early – on May 20.

Finally, there were a few times when it was not possible to interview the participants face-to-face due to pandemic restrictions, health concerns, or scheduling. I arranged a video call with them through Zoom on those rare occasions. I recorded the audio of our interviews, saving the data as before in Nexus and then deleting any recordings from my password-protected personal computer. No video recording is available, as per the consent forms I gave them.

3.3 Data Collection Process

At the beginning of my data collection, I collected and read the first set of journals, which were distributed at the very beginning of October so that the participants could give feedback on their motivation throughout September. Once those were completed, I read through them and prepared for my interviews. After each interview, I checked the audio, uploaded it to The University of Oxford's Nexus365 and saved the files.

Over the next ten months, I collected each journal, sending out any necessary follow-up emails. Next, I compiled all the data into separate Word documents on Nexus, one for each participant. As the second set of interviews was coming in, I began to consider the transcription process. I attempted to transcribe them by hand, but for time purposes, I chose Otter.ai (2022) as an automated transcription service. I then double-checked each interview on Otter.ai, listening to the audio and updating the transcriptions as necessary.

3.4 Data Analysis

When all the data mentioned above were fully transcribed and organised, I uploaded the documents to NVivo (v. 12 PRO) to aid my thematic analysis. Holliday (2015, p. 54) outlined a typical qualitative analysis approach that I utilised: code, decide on themes, create an argument, and then return to the data. My approach to step 1 - coding - was abductive. My dissertation supervisors recommended that I begin my analysis with the journals and examine the interviews

afterwards. Therefore, I began that process by printing the journals and organising them by month and participant. I then hand-coded them using a deductive approach to search for keywords and themes related to my RQs, such as student interest, interaction with people, stress, and exhaustion.

My approach turned abductive when I added in the inductive approach by reading through and searching for patterns in words or phrases that appeared without me expecting them. Some examples in the journal entries include writing about holidays, feedback from others, and family life.

I then carried out the same process in NVivo, looking first for data that would answer simple questions such as "How long have you been teaching?" and then using keyword searches to look for motivational factors like the love of English, experiences in their first year, advice for others, etc. Those steps follow what Holliday explained is step two in the process: determining themes.

Steps three and four in Holliday's (2015) analysis method are constructing an argument and then going back to the data (p. 54). First, I compiled the main ideas and arguments using nodes in NVivo, checking for topics like fluctuation in motivation or things they enjoy or appreciate about the job. I then reviewed the data again, searching for words and phrases that seemed to fit. The consistency of the main questions helped me in this process because I knew where to look for some of the answers, especially in the interview data, which was substantial.

After carrying out this thematic analysis, I decided to use magnitude coding to analyse the data across the months. Saldaña (2012) defines magnitude coding by saying,

> Magnitude Coding consists of and adds a supplemental alphanumeric or symbolic code or subcode to an existing coded datum or category to indicate its intensity, frequency, direction, presence, or evaluative content. Magnitude Codes can be qualitative, quantitative, and/or nominal indicators to enhance description (p. 72-73).

Saldaña argues that combining these two (qualitative data and quantitative measurement) is valuable. He adds this as an argument supporting magnitude coding in qualitative studies. "As

researchers we should keep ourselves open to numeric representation – when appropriate – as a supplemental heuristic to analysis" (p. 63).

In employing this magnitude coding, I read through the journals and then assigned a scale of 1-5 for how motivated they appeared each month – one being very low, two low, three neutral, four high, and five very high. Next, I assembled my analysis into a graph which included some quotes from my participants to demonstrate my analysis (see Table 5 in the next two pages). I then sent those to my supervisors. They responded by encouraging me to utilise member checking, confirm my results with the participants, and create a line graph tracing the trajectory of each participant's reported motivation levels over time.

Subsequently, I separated the data into each graph and sent each of the teachers their data, including their journal entries, three transcribed interviews, and my analysis. Finally, I sent them each an email and a message to ensure they had received it. All of them responded, with seven approving the numbers and graphs and two arguing that their motivation levels were higher than I had labelled. One of them only took issue with October, which I changed to reflect her explanation. The other, Zuzana, said she thought her numbers were higher across the board. Subsequently, I examined her journals and interviews again and made several changes. When I sent Zuzana a follow-up email, she responded immediately and said she agreed with my new analysis. The final results of the quotes and analysis of all participants are in Table 6. The numbers that correspond to the magnitude coding results are also in Table 6.

Reported motivation levels from the journals									
	Alena	Ema	Julia	Kristina	Martina	Sara	Simona	Viera	Zuzana
September	"every beginning… is very motivating" vs. "no interest from the side of (some) students"	"I haven't been feeling extra motivated..."	"This is the worst I have ever felt…"	"Rather high"	"positive feedback" vs. "me being tired…"	"joy of small human interaction" vs. "stress of the uncertainty"	"a self-motivated person" and "most of them [students] enjoyed it [fun quiz]"	"my motivation is really high"	"they greet me with a smile" vs. "health issues" and "lack of sleep"
October	"meeting of my students face to face" vs. "long sick leave"	"yoga practice"/"ready for the day" vs. "how much grading"	"holidays" vs. "I can't think of one situation when I felt motivated."	"two hard weeks"/"one of those down-months"	"sunny" and "holiday" vs. "generally… demotivated"	"excited" about "a lesson" vs. "students were not as excited"	"they [students] thanked me" and "self-motivated person"	"felt very motivated" vs. "demotivated" by "tests"	"other motivated people" vs. "frustrating thing"
November	N/A - sick leave	"got an anxiety attack" and "won't be able to continue like this"	"…felt motivated… zero preparation" vs. "reached my flexibility limits"	"chat with the head of department… really amazing" vs. "Slovak education system… seriously bothers me"	"given a thank you note" vs. "felt exhausted at times"	"authentic material… was excited" vs. "giving feedback… very time consuming"	"students… enjoyed…" vs. "behavioural issues in class"	"fulfill your own expectations" vs. "never-ending story"	"super excited… wonderful conversation" vs. "unpleasant conversations… cold feedback"
December	N/A - sick leave	"tired and miserable" and "compulsory meetings" vs. "Christmas bonus"	"didn't have that many assignments" vs. "survival mode… scared… stressed"	"interest and satisfaction in the eys of students" vs. "constant presence of Covid as a conversation topic"	"just felt tired… demotivated in general"	"do not recall… when I felt motivated" and "December is a very difficult month."	"Christmas bonus" vs. "felt very demotivated… students' feedbacks."	"looking forward to… break" and "upcoming holiday season"	"holidays… positive mood" vs. "extremely tired"

Table 5: First Journal Analysis

	Alena	Ema	Julia	Kristina	Martina	Sara	Simona	Viera	Zuzana
January	"finally met my students" and "interaction with students"	"I've started therapy" vs. "this semester has to end eventually"	"wasn't that tired" vs. "a lot of meetings"	"rested" vs "endless covid restrictions"	"I did my job well" vs. "lack of sleep" and "first week… felt terrible"	"excited to teach a few classes" vs. "the grade completion"	"financial motivation" vs. "frustration… when you're sick"	"successfully concluded all grades" vs. "students were not attending"	"didn't think… about motivation… had to do what was necessary" vs. "grading"
February	"new student from Ukraine" and "challenge and motivation" vs. "sick leave again"	"spring break" vs. "feel really exhausted" and "energy levels were really low"	"pressure was suddenly off" and "relying on routine"	"boy… wrote a story… love these moments" and "ability to help everyone… success"	"upcoming holidays" and "freshmen… enjoy the lessons" vs. "general tiredness"	"holidays" vs. "lack of excitement [from students]"	"one of the students confided" and "I can help someone"	"felt motivated… wanted to help…" vs. "some students… not doing their best"	"new semester starts" and "spring break"
March	"succeeded in involving all students" and "students are learning" vs. "correcting"	"Easter break" and "life outside" vs. "homeroom class… they… don't care… one of the main reasons I want to leave."	"health issues" and "lack of energy"	"They made truly wonderful progress" and "my work really can be very rewarding"	"My students… wanted me to teach them next year" vs. "some meetings that do not make sense"	"Not much internal motivation" and "a weird month" and "added to the stress"	"nothing out of the ordinary"	"checked all… tests" vs. "felt a bit pressured"	"preparing my students" vs. "overwhelmed with grading" BUT "Honestly, I think that I am never demotivated, it's more… frustration or exhaustion"
April	N/A - maternity	"calendar… remaining days" and "taking time for myself" vs. "feel overwhelmed"	"can't remember… when I felt particularly motivated" and "lack of motivation in students"	"vision of summer break" and "nearing its finale… uplifting"	"upcoming holidays" and "light at the end of the tunnel"	"increased the stress" and " a lot of grading" and "emotionally difficult" BUT "still do enjoy 'the normal time' with students"	"seminar… really educational" and "I love… English language" vs. "maintaining the discipline… exhausting"	"being with students" vs. "ill with covid" and "bad cough"	"meetings… fruitful" and "had a chance to relax" vs. "disappointment… negative feedback"
May	N/A - maternity	"crossing out the remaining days" vs. "too much work"	"end of the year… approaching" and "sense of responsibility"	"when I see them [students] work - and enjoy it" vs. "monthly salary… inflation" and "makes me sad"	"class asked if I could teach them" vs. "school year is not over" and "overall feeling… demotivating"	"grateful students" vs. "mentally and socially depleted"	"Good atmosphere" and "interaction" vs. "enormous workload"	"all of my students passed" and "thanked me" vs. "a lot to grade"	"doing my best" vs. [students] "indifferent attitude" and "overwhelmed"

Lowest	Quite low	In the middle	Fairly high	Very high	

Reported motivation levels from the journals	Alena	Ema	Julia	Kristina	Martina	Sara	Simona	Viera	Zuzana
September	"beginning is very motivating" vs. "no interest from the side of (some) students" **4**	"I haven't been feeling extra motivated..." **2**	"This is the worst I have ever felt…" **1**	"Rather high" **4**	"positive feedback" vs. "me being tired…" **3**	"joy of small human interaction" vs. "stress of the uncertainty" **3**	"a self-motivated person" and "most of them [students] enjoyed it [fun quiz]" **4**	"my motivation is really high" **5**	"they greet me with a smile" and "see positive results" vs. "health issues" and "lack of sleep" **4**
October	"meeting of my students face to face" vs. "long sick leave" **3**	"yoga practice"/"ready for the day" vs. "how much grading" **3**	"holidays" vs. "I can't think of one situation when I felt motivated." **2**	"two hard weeks"/"one of those down-months" **2**	"sunny" and "looking forward to holiday" vs. "generally… demotivated" **3**	"excited" about "a lesson" vs. "students were not as excited" **3**	"they [students] thanked me" and "self-motivated person" **4**	"felt very motivated" vs. "demotivated" by "tests" **3**	"other motivated people" vs. "frustrating thing" **4**
November	Leave **N/A**	"got an anxiety attack" and "won't be able to continue like this" **1**	"…felt motivated… zero preparation" vs. "reached my flexibility limits" **2**	"chat with the head of department… amazing" vs. "Slovak education system… seriously bothers me" **3**	"given a thank you note" vs. "felt exhausted at times" **3**	"authentic material… was excited" vs. "giving feedback… very time consuming" **3**	"students… enjoyed…" vs. "behavioural issues in class" **3**	"fulfill your own expectations" vs. "never-ending story" **3**	"super excited… wonderful conversation" vs. "unpleasant conversations… cold feedback" **3**
December	Leave **N/A**	"tired and miserable" and "compulsory meetings" vs. "Christmas bonus" **3**	"didn't have that many assignments" vs. "survival mode… scared… stressed" **3**	"interest in the eys of students" vs. "constant presence of Covid as a conversation topic" **3**	"just felt tired… demotivated in general" **2**	"do not recall… when I felt motivated" and "December is a very difficult month." **2**	"Christmas bonus" vs. "felt very demotivated… students' feedbacks." **3**	"looking forward to… break" and "upcoming holiday season" **4**	"holidays… positive mood" **4**
January	"finally met my students" and "interaction with students" **4**	"I've started therapy" vs. "this semester has to end eventually" **2**	"wasn't that tired" vs. "a lot of meetings" **3**	"rested" vs "endless covid restrictions" **3**	"I did my job well" vs. "lack of sleep" and "first week… felt terrible" **3**	"excited to teach a few classes" vs. "the grade completion" **3**	"financial motivation" vs. "frustration… when you're sick" **3**	"successfully concluded all grades" vs. "students were not attending" **3**	"didn't think… about motivation… had to do what was necessary" vs. "grading" **3**
February	"new student from Ukraine" and "challenge and motivation" vs. "sick leave again" **3**	"spring break" vs. "feel really exhausted" and "energy levels were really low" **3**	"pressure was suddenly off" and "relying on routine" **4**	"boy… wrote a story… love these moments" and "ability to help everyone… success" **4**	"upcoming holidays" and "freshmen… enjoy the lessons" vs. "general tiredness" **3**	"holidays" vs. "lack of excitement [from students]" **3**	"one of the students confided" and "I can help someone" **4**	"felt motivated… wanted to help…" vs. "some students… not doing their best" **3**	"new semester starts" and "spring break" and "I wouldn't say I was demotivated" **5**
March	"succeeded in involving all students" and "students are learning" vs. "correcting" **3**	"Break"/"life outside" vs. "[students] don't care… one of the main reasons I want to leave." **3**	"health issues" and "lack of energy" **2**	"They made truly wonderful progress" and "my work really can be very rewarding" **5**	"My students… wanted me to teach them next year" vs. "some meetings that do not make sense" **4**	"Not much internal motivation" and "a weird month" and "added to the stress" **2**	"nothing out of the ordinary" **3**	"checked all… tests" vs. "felt a bit pressured" **3**	"preparing my students" vs. "grading" BUT "Honestly, I think that I am never demotivated, it's more… frustration or exhaustion" **4**
April	Leave **N/A**	"remaining days" and "taking time for myself" vs. "feel overwhelmed" **3**	"can't remember when I felt particularly motivated" and "lack of motivation in students" **2**	"vision of summer break" and "nearing its finale… uplifting" **4**	"upcoming holidays" and "light at the end of the tunnel" **4**	"stress"/"a lot of grading" and "emotionally difficult" BUT "still do enjoy 'the normal time' with students" **2**	"seminar… really educational" and "I love… English language" vs. "maintaining the discipline… exhausting" **3**	"being with students" vs. "ill with covid" and "bad cough" **2**	"meetings… fruitful" and "had a chance to relax" vs. "disappointment, more than demotivation" **4**
May	Leave **N/A**	"crossing out the remaining days" vs. "too much work" **3**	"end of the year… approaching" and "sense of responsibility" **4**	"when I see students work and enjoy it" vs. "monthly salary… inflation" and "makes me sad" **3**	"class asked if I could teach them" vs. "school year is not over" and "overall feeling… demotivating" **2**	"grateful students" vs. "mentally and socially depleted" **3**	"Good atmosphere" and "interaction" vs. "enormous workload" **4**	"all of my students passed" and "thanked me" vs. "a lot to grade" **4**	"doing my best" vs. [students'] "indifferent attitude" and "overwhelmed" **3**
	Very low	Low	Neutral	High	Very high				

Table 6: Second Journal Analysis

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

This chapter will cover the results of the qualitative magnitude coding and thematic analysis I utilised with the journal and interview questions. I will report the results of the research question and sub questions and discuss those results in each section.

Because this study examined multiple case studies, the results of each of these research and sub questions naturally differ from case to case. It was challenging to analyse my participants' reported motivation levels because these participants' understandings of motivation were not all the same. This limitation showed itself in some of the responses I heard in the interviews and read in the journals. For example, in her March journal, Zuzana said, "Honestly, I think that I am never demotivated. It's more the feelings of frustration or exhaustion, rather than demotivation, that prevent me from being enthusiastic about the tasks." Likewise, Simona wrote in her January entry that she was feeling "not necessarily demotivation, more of frustration."

In addition, Sara said that she "would not call it demotivation. Rather it was more the lack of excitement about what was happening in the classes" and Martina wrote in her December journal, "It is difficult to tell tiredness and demotivation apart, especially in months like November and December." Martina had previously said something similar in her November journal and compared general tiredness to demotivation. This struggle to differentiate between exhaustion and demotivation could be one reason these language teachers' motivation is so difficult to evaluate.

To account for these limitations, I used the questions in the semi-structured interviews to gain more detail regarding the participants' concepts of motivation and was able to find some answers. I also referred back to the definitions of motivation from Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021) and Sahakyan et al. (2018) to centre my own ideas about motivation.

To answer the research and sub questions, I analysed these case studies' data using thematic analysis and magnitude coding through NVivo (v. 12 PRO), as I wrote in the Methodology section. The results show both similarities and differences between participants. I will compare the results and then analyse some of the factors that have affected those results.

4.1 RQ1: How does Slovak EFL teachers' motivation change over a school year?

This research question will primarily focus on the data gleaned from the journal entries, with excerpts from the interviews supplementing those findings. Using magnitude coding as defined by Saldaña (2012), I created a line graph (see Figure 1), which shows the participants' motivational changes over the 2021-2022 school year.

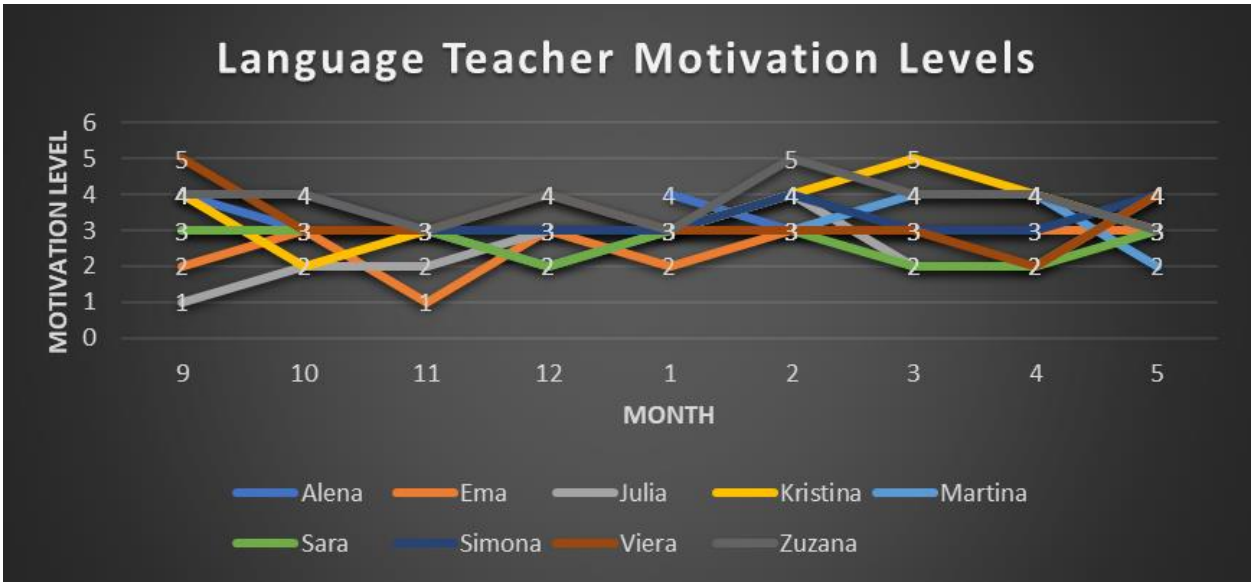


Figure 1: Line Graph Showing the Changes in LTM

4.1.1 Motivation Early in the Year

The very first journal entries were from September and written in early October. I found, based on the magnitude coding, that the participants' motivation ranged from 1 to 5, with reported very low and very high levels of motivation and energy for the new school year. I had expected my participants to start the school year with high motivation, but I discovered that some of them experienced quite a bit of stress. Sara noted that the beginning of the school year included many very tiring activities and that the introductory weeks took much energy. Julia mentioned feeling overwhelmed with duties, and Ema spoke of all the pressure she felt. Conversely, Viera, Alena, Kristina, and Zuzana started on a high note, explaining that the beginning holds a lot of excitement and expectation and that they are motivated by that and by the students themselves. Simona also wrote cheerfully about her motivation levels, noting that

she is a self-motivated person who loves English. On the other hand, Martina's motivation was neutral, as she wrote about enjoying her classes but being tired because of external happenings.

Furthermore, in September most of the colleagues noted a mixture of motivation and demotivation. They reported that their motivation was connected to interactions with and positive feedback from students, with eight of the nine teachers (minus Ema) mentioning students affecting their motivation levels positively. Conversely, when students were rowdy or uncooperative, these teachers' motivation levels dropped. Seven of the teachers either reported high motivation or both motivation and demotivation. Kristina, in particular, said, "The school year has just started, so my motivation levels are rather high." There is a recurring theme throughout the journals of her frustration with the Covid situation as well as her happiness to be back teaching in person.

In October, the participants' motivation levels evened out, with their numbers between two and four (see Figure 3). I had expected high levels of motivation still because the teachers were possibly still fresh after the beginning of the school year but were also settled into a routine. Julia and Kristina described the lowest motivation, with Julia citing frustration with tasks and technical issues and Kristina expressing her struggles with illness in her family. Alena, Ema, Martina, Sara, and Viera all reported neutral levels of motivation and Simona and Zuzana described high motivation. These last two were excited about new projects and lessons that they had planned.

4.1.2 Late Autumn and Winter

There was a dip in motivation in November, which is what I expected, as November is when issues like seasonal depression begin. Martina mentioned the weather being a factor in her energy and motivation levels, and Ema cited November as the month when she experienced an anxiety attack. No one appeared to be motivated above the level of a neutral three.

The following two winter months, December and January, were more similar to October, with motivation between a two and a four. However, in December, several participants mentioned being at home in lockdown for two weeks as a nice break and a chance to be with their families. They were also looking forward to the holidays. In January, five of the teachers

cited deadlines and the busyness of the end of the semester as either a motivating or demotivating factor. For some, completing the tasks was motivating, but for others, just tiring. Kristina and Julia wrote that they were not as tired in January and said that the three-week-long holiday helped.

4.1.3 Second Semester

When it comes to the second semester, I anticipated a spike in motivation in February because of the new semester and upcoming Spring Break. Four of the teachers did mention the break as a motivational factor in their journals. Zuzana reported the highest motivation in February, saying, "it is a time for introducing changes… and filling me with hope that now I already know what I am doing…" Though Viera said that students not doing their best was demotivating, Simona, Martina, and Kristina shared anecdotes about students opening up in their classes and enjoying the lessons.

The busyness of the later Spring months of March and April led to a mixture of results. For Julia and Sara, those two months were more difficult because of work stress, low student motivation, and health issues. On the other hand, Kristina, Martina, and Zuzana all had high to very high motivation. They were motivated by their students' progress, exam preparation, and the upcoming holidays.

Some participants, like Viera, Simona, and Julia, ended the journals in May with reportedly high motivation, while some of the others struggled with weariness. Five of the teachers cited students' hard work and appreciation as a high motivational factor to end out the year. Also, a few of them mentioned the upcoming Summer Break as something that lifted their spirits.

4.1.4 General Findings for RQ1

In their journals, several of the participants revealed more details explaining the ups and downs of their motivation over the school year. One of the first questions I asked them about motivation in the three interviews was, "How motivated do you feel in your work at this point in the school year?"

As the year unfolded and our interviews started in early/mid-October, the participants cited October as a hectic yet productive month, with the coming winter months being more of a let-down because of the bad weather. Some of them, like Sara, loved autumn: "I love October and November because you finally get to teach, and the routine starts."

Near the end of the first semester and beginning of the second, when we sat for our second interview, a few participants expressed higher stress loads because of all the work preparing the fifth-year students for their leaving exams. When asked how she felt in March, Martina said:

> The transition itself, well, you know the year is gonna end. So, somehow, you only want to tick: 'Okay, it's done, it's done.' And in September, usually… 'Oh, I want to change this, and I want to do it in a different way.' Whereas now, in March, you basically survive day after day.

Just as there are a variety of answers for the other two interviews, the final interviews with the participants also yielded some interesting results. Simona, who had just switched from teaching adults to teaching teenagers this year, said:

> I think it's much better than at the beginning. Especially because it's not new anymore. So, I finally find my way around all these processes and how this school operates and got to know all the people - because at the beginning, it was too much… there were more factors. Maybe I mentioned it, uh, at our first interview… also I struggled with some students, that is keeping the discipline in the classes, which I wasn't used to before.

In looking at the results of the magnitude coding (see Figure 1), we can see that the motivation levels of the nine participants vary much more in the beginning of the year but converge after that, ending on a more neutral note.

We can apply Sahakyan et al.'s (2018) idea of *feasible selves* in understanding the fluctuation in these teachers' motivation. Teachers cannot expect to be constantly highly motivated but have to approach their expectations of themselves in a realistic, feasible manner. The teachers in this study who maintained a steady level of motivation perhaps have a clear idea of their feasible possible selves.

4.2 SQ1: What factors regularly motivate these teachers?

Throughout this process, I discovered a variety of factors that have influenced these participants in their teaching over the 2021-2022 school year. Because this research is a multiple case study, it is not possible to generalise my findings beyond that of this Slovak private school context. However, I would be curious to compare these motivational factors in other schools in Slovakia and beyond. I will explore each of the primary factors in the following sections.

4.2.1 Age and Experience Factors

One of the factors that I found especially intriguing was the age/experience factor. Slovakia's Institute of Educational Policy (IVP) and the National Institute of Certified Education Measurements (NUCEM) worked together in 2018-2019 to investigate why primary and secondary school teachers consider leaving teaching as a career to pursue something else. They used the International Assessment of Key Adult Competencies (PIAAC) to study almost 900 teachers and ascertain how many considered changing professions and what factors led to that. Their results showed that two of the greatest factors that influenced such decisions were age and subject specialisation, finding that it was teachers under 35 years who were the most likely to pursue other work opportunities (Ministerstvo, Organizácie Ministerstva [Ministry, Organisations of the Ministry], 2020; Martinák, Varsik, & NUCEM. 2020).

Two of this study's participants – Julia and Ema - are between the ages of 28 and 30 and have been working as teachers for six and nine years, respectively. Of those teaching years, Ema has taught at this current bilingual high school for six of those years, while Julia has only taught at this school. There is some overlap between these participants' answers, resulting in an interesting comparison between them and contrast with their older colleagues.

4.2.1.1 Newer Teachers

What separates Julia and Ema's responses from the other seven at the beginning of the school year is their level of worry and demotivation. Julia says in her journal, "But overall, ever since the beginning of September, I feel the lack of motivation to go to work, and I have to persuade myself to do it. This is the worst I have ever felt when it comes to work." She cites anxiety about her health and the uncertainty of the Covid situation as affecting her negatively

while explaining that students' interest in her literature classes has the opposite effect. In like manner, Ema starts off her September journal by saying, "There were not too many moments when I felt motivated." What keeps her going comes from outside the school when she has time to rest and recharge her batteries by doing activities she enjoys.

I approached this thematic analysis with an open mind, trying not to focus on what I expected to find but rather to let the data speak for itself. However, I discovered that if I had made a hypothesis about the age/experience factor, I might not have accurately predicted the results correctly. I know from experience that the first few years of teaching are exhausting and that it is tempting to quit. However, I also assumed that people in their twenties and early thirties have more energy and are, therefore, more highly motivated. In this study, however, the two youngest participants struggled the most with the lowest motivation. They mentioned many positive factors in their journals and interviews, but there were also moments where they both expressed a desire to have a break from teaching. This feeling of exhaustion and burnout is what Acheson et al. (2016) write about when describing emotional labour. Ema and Julia both spoke about the hard work that they had done and seemed to be feeling the burden of that.

As Ema mentioned in her second interview, she is grateful for all she has, but her salary level and demanding schedule are stressful. She also says, "I know I'm giving my best in this work. And it's also my best years when it comes to that… until when can I actually go like this? Continue like this?" In our last interview, she again affirmed this position, saying she wants a break from teaching in a couple of years. Though she will have close to a decade of experience by that time, she will be thirty and feels she needs a sabbatical. Julia, too, feels discouraged in her work and as though she does not have a voice in making changes at school. She also wants some kind of a break from teaching and is unsure about her future.

4.2.1.2 More Experienced Teachers

Conversely, the other seven teachers, aged 36 to 51, all expressed a desire to continue teaching. Some of them, like Martina, talked about their current workplace and compared it with other schools in Slovakia, noting that it is a better place to work than many others. Three of the teachers' kids go to that school's sister elementary school and have the benefit of free tuition for their kids, something they do not want to lose. Of the seven participants older than Julia and

Ema, most have families of their own, and all have their own homes. These factors appear to tie them to Bratislava and teaching more despite the unpredictability of motivation.

Because of this, I speculate whether there is some age or experience level that most teachers have to reach to continue in that profession. Is it because they feel sure of what they are doing in their work? Or is it that they cannot imagine changing to anything else after over ten years of teaching? Or perhaps it is that there is a sense of security in the work they have? Maybe they feel it is like a calling and cannot imagine anything else. All of these possibilities appeared in the participants' answers to the questions about their future. It appears that this study's participants who are more settled in their lives, with families, houses/apartments, many years of experience, and a stable future, are more likely than the others to want to continue teaching.

4.2.2 Students

One of the most prominent factors I observed in the data was the influence of students on teachers' motivation. Some articles and books have emphasised how valuable teacher motivation is in influencing learners (e.g., Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014; Arnold, 2020), but my participants' responses showed that the opposite is also true. There are different aspects to this that I would like to examine briefly.

4.2.2.1. Student Interest

The students' interest in their lessons either brought joy or frustration to these nine teachers. When students did not come to class prepared or were not motivated to do their work, it negatively impacted the mood of the whole classroom, as Julia wrote. Likewise, Zuzana found students' indifference frustrating when she was trying to prepare them for their leaving exams. Despite her hard work and preparation to make the lessons engaging and interactive, the students in one particular group made it quite challenging.

However, when students were interested in the subject, it improved these teachers' motivation. Kristina shared one moment when a quiet boy with a stutter wrote a great story in her literature class and was very pleased with her feedback on his writing. She was very proud of him. Similarly, Kristina also said,

> Now that I am back in class with my students, motivation comes in little things, e.g. in the form of a junior, a foot taller than myself, telling me that he actually likes poetry(the only one in his class) and makes me look forward to teaching it.

Another example of student interest came from Alena, who shared a motivational moment when she made a joke and one of the students started laughing. Kristina wrote, "If a teacher sees interest and satisfaction in the eyes of students, it is very rewarding."

4.2.2.2 Interaction with Students

Another aspect of students' influence on these teachers is the time spent interacting with them face-to-face. After 2020-2021, a challenging school year of over seven months at home, Sara wrote in September's journal about the benefits of being back in the classroom with the students and of enjoying being able to "get to normal/real teaching." There was a big benefit to interacting with students on a day-to-day basis. It may have been stressful for her, but it also brought joy in many moments and was a motivating factor both at the beginning and the end of the school year. Sara finished the year by writing about "grateful students who successfully passed Maturita and who show admiration for the work of the teachers" and "the pleasant interactions with students… when they came after the exams and thanked me, or I praised them for their performance."

Other participants mentioned interacting with students having a positive effect on their motivation. For example, Alena wrote that she was happy to be back at work with the students after being away and Simona wrote about their energy in class.

4.2.2.3 Student Feedback

At the school where these nine teachers work, the students give written, anonymous feedback to the teachers. The school instructs the students on how to be constructive with their feedback, and it is generally considered a helpful tool. However, one teacher noted that negative feedback can be discouraging, mainly because the teachers are working hard. On the other hand, positive feedback helps build morale. For example, Viera said, "I was pleased when my students wrote in their feedback that they enjoyed our lessons, the atmosphere, and my approach, so I gained motivation again."

Some of the feedback comes in spontaneous, verbal form or personal written communication, such as the thank you notes that some teachers received at the end of the school year. Simona wrote a short anecdote about a first-year class enjoying some of the activities she had prepared for them, and she said that “they thanked me enthusiastically afterwards.”

4.2.3 The English Language and Related Subjects

Another key factor in LTM is the subjects themselves. As I wrote in the section on how each of the teachers began teaching, some of them decided to or fell into teaching because they were studying something interesting and found that they enjoyed teaching it. Alena loves teaching both history and English, both of which are subjects that she studied and has taught. She is also passionate about content-based subjects like Global Studies and British Literature because of their potential to inspire and challenge students in their own lives. Her data shows that her love of what she teaches is a vital part of her make-up as a teacher.

Ema also told me about a subject she enjoyed when she said, “Yeah, I have a grammar seminar for seniors. And I really enjoy grammar. Well, as opposed to some other colleagues who really don't like it. I kind of find fun in it. I don't know.” On the other hand, Kristina enjoys the literature side of the language, saying,

> Oh, I love the language. It's the reason I started studying it. I started when I was like 14, I think. We didn't have it in elementary school, so I took an English course. And then I started studying at university and I fell in love with literature, with the language, with the humour. Oh my goodness! So much fun.

4.2.4 Holidays

As I wrote in the findings from my first research questions, one of the motivating factors that the participants cited in their monthly diaries was looking forward to holidays. Though teachers are often criticised for the number of holidays they have, it is a challenging job. It is, therefore, unsurprising that winter, spring, and summer breaks, along with all the other minor holidays, make such a difference. As Julia aptly mentioned, “When I see breaks/holidays approaching, I have to say that I can cope with going to work.” After reading through their journal responses, I saw that all but one of the teachers mentioned looking forward to holidays.

4.2.5 Salary/Pay

The Slovak education sector, particularly its government's Ministry of Education, has received criticism recently about how much money goes towards state education. According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), out of its almost 40 member countries, Slovakia is among the bottom few in teachers' salaries (2021, p. 319). The OECD further supports these facts with statistics showing that lower secondary school teachers with many years of experience and suitable qualifications are paid yearly salaries that "range from less than USD 20 000 in Hungary and the Slovak Republic" (2021, p. 360). The starting salaries for teachers are around €300 less than the average national wage (Terenzani, 2022). However, for teachers like the participants in this study who work at private schools, the pay is better because their salaries come from both the state and tuition.

Though the situation is better at their workplace, my participants still sometimes mentioned salary as a stressor. In the journals, two teachers mentioned the Christmas bonus as a motivating factor. At the same time, there were two other notes in different months about the struggles of being underpaid, especially on sick leave.

On the other hand, Alena said that she "wouldn't be able to do the job just for the money," adding that she wants to give something to future generations. However, she argued that being paid enough is a basic need and that teachers at state schools are not paid nearly enough. For that reason, she sought out private schools for work because although teachers there still do not earn as much as teachers at, say, international schools, it is much easier to survive than it is for the teachers with state school salaries. Alena further bemoaned the situation by saying that people who study pedagogy have to decide whether teaching is "something that you can afford."

Ema also agreed with the importance of pay. She said it is "mostly about the money" when it comes to stress, emphasising that sometimes money can be tight. Martina and Simona also said that they could not imagine how married partners who are teachers could afford to live on two teachers' salaries, especially with a family. Julia echoes that by saying that though they make enough money, it is not proportionate to the level of stress that teachers have to deal with. Kristina further expounds on the issue by explaining that salary is connected to how valued employees feel, something that Simona said in her interview as well.

Martina informed me that part of the issue of wages in Slovakia is that teachers are paid the same amount all over the country, though the cost of living varies from region to region. She also told me in her interview that because Bratislava has the highest cost of living, it is much more challenging for a teacher to make ends meet in the capital city than in the smaller towns and cities in the rest of Slovakia.

4.2.6 Insecurity and the Covid-19 Pandemic

One of the questions I added to the interviews was regarding the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the lives of these nine teachers. Though the journal questions included nothing about the pandemic, they did appear in several entries, with participants mentioning stress levels changing because of the insecurity of the situation. The comments about the pandemic were mainly negative, though some participants appreciated working from home. Kristina felt weary of its "constant presence… as a conversation topic," while Sara and Julia cited the stress of the uncertainty affecting them and Viera mentioned the absences of teachers and students as a struggle.

4.2.7 Overall Findings for SQ1

Though there were other motivational factors that these participants wrote about, such as external factors like family life or hobbies, I chose to focus on these because of their prevalence in the journals and interviews. As the months went by, these participants' motivation fluctuated based on the factors I discussed in this section. Some of the factors, such as interaction with students and salary are similar to those that Stężycka and Etherington (2020) discovered in their assessment of motivational factors.

4.3 SQ2: Why do Slovak teachers choose to teach the English language?

The answer to this research question came from my initial interviews with these nine participants. I asked each of them what prompted them to begin teaching in the first place, and there were both similar and differing responses.

4.3.1 Family Influence - Teachers in the Family

Interestingly, Alena, Kristina, Sara, and Viera all credit their families for being the ones to push, encourage, or inspire them to take up the gauntlet of teaching. For example, Alena explained that she came from a family of "plenty of teachers" and only had to decide which subjects to teach. She ended up choosing History and English as her two specialisations. Likewise, Kristina comes from a family of teachers. Her mother wanted her to follow in her footsteps as a teacher. Kristina resisted that for a while but finally found herself studying two of her favourite subjects: English Literature and Music. She added, "But I still didn't think I would teach. I don't know what I thought. I had no idea what I would do after. But somehow, I don't really know how; I just ended up teaching. But I like it. It's fun."

Similarly, Sara's mother was also a teacher, though, unlike Kristina's mother, Sara's mother did not want her to become a teacher because she knew how challenging and poorly paid the profession was. However, Sara chose to study Computer Science and English, thinking that having skills and training in both areas would give her an advantage. She ended up enjoying the teaching practice part of her degree and decided to try teaching.

In the same way, Viera's mother was also a teacher, and Viera chose to study Slovak and English, preferring to teach the latter. She decided on languages because she found science and mathematics quite challenging. Likewise, Martina explained in her interview that she got into teaching by avoiding subjects like Physics or Maths and sticking with her favourite subject: languages. She received her acceptance into university to study English and German for either translation or teaching. However, her father pushed her to choose to teach, arguing that translation would always be there as a backup option. Though she worked for an airline right after university, she eventually gave in, put aside her fear of being a lousy teacher, and began working at a bilingual school.

4.3.2 Love of the English Language

On the other hand, Simona was not encouraged by her family to pursue much education. She moved to England as a young adult and got her education there, focusing not on teaching but on interpretation, a job she loved. Interpretation changed to teaching when some friends approached her to ask for help with their English while Simona was home on maternity leave. Thus began her private lessons, which evolved into working for businesses and eventually this

current school after moving back to Bratislava and looking for work during the Covid-19 pandemic.

4.3.3 Other Influences

Julia's journey into teaching began when she was in university. She wanted to teach at the university level because she knew the educational system needed improvement. To achieve this end, she was finishing her master's degree and working towards a PhD when her mother talked her into a teaching position at a hotel academy, which was supposedly a good school. Though her first year was challenging, she still liked the idea of teaching and decided to continue, especially after finding her current job at this bilingual high school.

Similarly, Ema was also studying (in this case, her bachelor's degree) when she began teaching. Our department head was her former teacher and knew she was skilled in English. Because this school needed to find another English teacher, they asked Ema to apply to fill in some subbing classes. Thus began her foray into teaching.

4.3.4 Vocation

Zuzana describes her choice to study teaching in words that suggest a calling or vocation:

> Well, I think that I have always wanted to become a teacher. You know, it was my choice number one, and my parents wanted me to study law. But yeah, I have also gone to the entrance exams to the Faculty of Law. But I was not successful. And I think that I set my heart on teaching at a very early age. I mean, I remember myself imagining being a teacher, even when I was in primary school...

4.3.5 Overall Findings for SQ2:

Each participant in this study has a slightly different story, some of which bear more resemblance to each other than others. Family context plays an integral part in guiding these women's decisions. Other factors, such as interest in the subjects, interest in teaching, or the need for work, also influence the decision to teach.

4.4 SQ3: What keeps these L2 teachers in their work?

To investigate this sub question, I asked my participants about their vision for the future and how they imagined themselves in their future working lives. That question, paired with the questions about motivation, gave me much to work with.

4.4.1 Surviving the First Year

In the first set of interviews with the teachers, I asked them what their first year of teaching was like to see how their careers started and how they got over the hurdle of the first year. Their responses all highlighted the stress they had experienced and the feeling of barely surviving or running on adrenaline. Their first year of teaching involved much preparation, which led to a lack of sleep, according to the participants.

When I asked Alena what kept her in the profession after such a challenging year, she said,

> One part of it was probably because I still believe that I want to teach, and I love to be with the kids in a classroom... And, well, I put a lot of effort into the preparation and preparing the lessons. And then when I saw that they really learned something and they started thinking about some things from a different perspective, or they started speaking more, and before they were quite shy, it really made me happy. And I felt this fulfilment… the other thing is that I'm the kind of person who, when I start something, I want to finish it. I just don't want to give up.

This attitude of not giving up was not the only reason for continuing teaching that the participants mentioned. Ema and Julia, who both began their first or second year of teaching at their current school, talked about the support system the school offered them and how that kept them going.

4.4.2 Love of the English Language

Another reason these participants stay in their jobs is one of the factors I wrote about in SQ1 - the love of the English language. One of the participants who wrote about English

regularly was Simona. Because she loves the subject so much and can self-motivate during tough times, she can maintain a neutral or high level of motivation.

> Yeah, and it's [English] a really lively language because it evolves constantly. And I've learned every second there's one or two new words added, so it's really flexible, again, compared to my native tongue… [I] think it's also really nice, and it has a nice melody, nice rhythm. I love everything about English and… also specifically, I love grammar.

4.4.3 The Students

Again, one of the primary motivational factors in this study was the students. One example of this appeared in Martina's data. She often focused in her journals and sometimes in her interviews on her students, their responses to her, and their requests for her to teach them next year, which improved her mood. She said,

> Motivating: when you really see you have a good class and the class works. For example, with this year's freshmen, I am so glad. And they really motivate me, like, *they* motivate *me*. Because they learn, they usually write their tests 100%. So, I'm kind of proud, okay, I'm the one teaching them, and they do well, and I know that they like my lessons. So, that's the motivating part.

4.4.4 Vision

Because this is a multiple case study, it is natural that each of the individual cases showed different results. I know that if I had chosen to do a single case study of any one of these teachers, I would still have had a lot of interesting data to work with. However, because I wished to compare their results and look for similarities across the board, I decided to study all of them.

After analysing this data and comparing the changes in motivation among these nine teachers, there are two cases, in particular, I want to highlight: Zuzana and Sara. They were the two who gave me the most detail in their interviews and seemed to maintain their motivation to work hard quite steadily throughout the school year. Based on their description of their motivation, they both appear to have and maintain a clear vision (Kubanyiova, 2014; Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014) for their careers.

4.4.4.1 Zuzana

In particular, Zuzana stood out for her consistent vision both short-term and long-term. Though she struggled in the busyness to respond to the journals right away, she wrote long responses compared to some of the others, and our discussions during her interviews were fruitful. She seemed surprised when I asked her about motivation, saying that she does not usually think about whether she is motivated or not. In our interviews, she described several projects that she either had been or is currently a part of. For example, in her first few years of teaching, she started her own language school in her hometown. When she moved to Bratislava, she joined the group of people starting this current school where all of the participants work. Though she was sometimes on maternity leave, she continued to teach some private lessons. Now, as one of the senior teachers at the school, she continues to involve herself in various projects that aim to better the school, its students, and its teachers.

Zuzana strikes me as someone who is highly motivated in her work. When I asked her if she liked teaching, she said she loved it. Zuzana speaks with energy and describes her job in cheerful language, saying,

> I want to grow professionally. I want to become a better speaker of the language, user of the language. That's what I've been working on for years… maybe what I like is invention and innovating things, you know. So, maybe innovating the program would be interesting, this bilingual program, maybe introducing some new subjects, maybe some new technologies and different ways of teaching, you know. Something that we've been doing with these remote learning weeks, or maybe experimenting a little bit more, and working on those skills and implementing some of those things. And maybe this can be inspirational not only to other schools but maybe to those policymakers who can somehow notice what we are doing here.

As we can see from this quote, Zuzana is passionate about their work at her school and how that work affects the schooling system and country.

In her description of her day-to-day work life and how she views herself as a teacher, it is clear that she puts her whole heart into what she does. She explained that she wanted to use

every second well, so she spent much time preparing meaningful lessons for her students. She has a vision for each class and her students' learning.

> I want them to maintain this flow… from the first moment of the class… you know what your goal is. It doesn't mean that you achieve the goal, but you know what you're aiming at. And I try to engage all my students… I still plan a lot. I've been teaching for 25 years, and I still try to innovate and think of new activities... I learn all the time… And I want somehow to make sure that I'm doing a good job. I feel this responsibility for them. That even though some of them do not want to study English or they are not interested in, you know, Coursebook [General English]… I just want to make it fun for them. I want to make them understand why we are doing these things… And I want them to, even though maybe that's not their cup of tea, just to at least do it because they understand that it's important for them.

Following up with Zuzana in February, we discussed her motivation at the beginning of the second semester. Though she expressed that she was busy with projects, she did not seem discouraged by that but instead energised. She is interested in coming up with new ideas, and her personality seems to be that of a visionary. Part of her inspiration comes from fellow teachers, whether by observing a lesson or working together in a group to promote skills development. She later said that "being part of this community" is important to her.

In our third interview, I expected Zuzana to bring her regular upbeat energy to the conversation, and I was not disappointed. When I inquired about her current motivation levels, her response was similar to the two previous interviews. She had much that she was looking forward to and was excited to learn new things. She will be taking on more of an administrative role and duties next year and said she was eager to continue learning in that position.

What connects Zuzana to the less experienced teachers is that she appreciates change and "a nice break" from regular, full-time teaching. Perhaps taking steps to change the routine from time to time would help teachers of all levels maintain the same energy and excitement as Zuzana does. She does not stay in one place, metaphorically speaking, but constantly challenges herself and looks ahead to the next adventure. Her introspection revealed this:

> And then, I just feel that for me, it's natural to have these ups and downs. So, I know that, when I'm feeling my worst, that probably, there's a way that, again, I will start feeling better, and then I will be motivated. So, I just try to overcome that somehow… and I know that… I have these responsibilities. So, simply doing these things, and just surviving, and with this hope… maybe now I'm not feeling very well, but last month, I felt so motivated… So, hopefully, it will come back again, you know?

There are a few factors for which she blames demotivation, general discouragement, and fatigue. One of those is the students' lack of energy, especially near the end of the school year when they are anxious to graduate. She describes their apathy and blank stares, calling them energy "vampires." However, that particular issue only applied to one of her groups. When she described being in the classroom with her other younger students, she said there is a good relationship between her and the students and that they enjoy their lessons together.

All in all, Zuzana was a fascinating person to observe. She is comfortable in her own skin and has a short-term vision for each lesson and a long-term vision for her classes and her future. When asked in the second interview what she thought would improve her motivation, she responded with a desire to take up a course or learn something new, saying that teachers spend many of their workdays giving but that it would be nice to receive something as well.

> I try to analyse the situation, and I try to come up with something that I can change, and then I start looking forward to changing some things, you know? And this is… always when I have a project, or when I have something that I'm looking forward to, it fills me with more energy and kind of hope. And it helps me just start again…

4.4.4.2 Sara

Another person who showed signs of maintaining vision in her career was Sara. Like Zuzana, Sara has taught in various schools, though her two most recent jobs were at small private secondary schools in Bratislava. When, in her first interview, I inquired about her current job and future career, she said she was "in some kind of a limbo in terms of my development." However, she told me that she works hard to improve her English and constantly adds to her vocabulary. When she hears a previously unknown phrase or idiom, she takes note of it and tries to use it.

Just as the other teachers in this study did, Sara credited the students as one of the main factors positively affecting her motivation. Indeed, that was her first response when I asked her in our October interview what motivates her as a teacher.

> Sometimes I have to say, I do enjoy when they like me as a person, you know, when they see me as kind of a role model but that's probably not the best motivation to be a teacher, you know, to make people adore you… But it's something that adds to the feeling, especially what I now know is I do have students who have graduated already and then after a couple of years they return, and you're able to talk to them like to real human beings… and they want to share some things with you, and that gives you the feeling that it makes sense. Like the whole thing makes sense no matter whatever ups and downs we had on the way to the final year.

Another part of Sara's motivation that stood out was her curiosity and desire to keep learning. Her response to the question of what she brings to the table as a Slovak teacher of English was that she knows how difficult it is to learn a language, and she is determined to keep on in the learning process. When she learns something interesting and new about pronunciation, for example, she shares it and her enthusiasm with her students, no doubt influencing both her motivation and theirs.

Sara appears to understand her purpose in her work quite clearly, emphasising the need for sharing purpose and vision with the students as well. Her advice for Slovaks thinking of teaching English is this:

> … for the language teachers, it's great if you really practise your English in various aspects, and maybe also travelling might be a good way of broadening not only your language skills, but also the understanding of differences between people… because language is something that should, you know, unite people… I'm teaching my students that we are not learning a language to sound like Americans or sound like British, but we are learning a language because we want to get to know people. We want to get to know what they think and why they think that…

Sara is clearly a very motivated teacher who has a vision for the future. She is not immune to the challenges of demotivation, however, and she also marked her ups and downs

over the months. The most difficult times for her are when she must accomplish a lot of administrative tasks, particularly at the beginning of the school year and near the end of it. That, coupled with students' occasional lack of interest or negative attitudes meant that she felt more discouraged in her work. Conversely, if she saw students having an "aha moment," she found that her work was validated.

4.4.5 Overall findings for SQ3:

Finally, Zuzana and Sara were not the only teachers who showed clear vision for their future and that of their students. For example, Alena's hope for the future is this:

> Well, I would like to continue in teaching what I teach now and improve my lessons so that I would maybe open the windows of certain subjects… for example, in British Literature, I, my goal really is not that I would like to teach them everything about Shakespeare. I'd like to give them this idea that maybe one day, in the future, they will go to the theatre and they will enjoy Shakespeare there. Or they will read, I don't know, Zadie Smith, and they will enjoy the book. Or they will have an idea about British culture and why something happens.

Each of the nine teachers wrote and spoke with passion about their jobs. Though their motivation fluctuated throughout the year, they all had times where their motivation was steady and they enjoyed their work. However, those who spoke about teaching long-term were the ones who already had taught for many years and who utilised vision in their day-to-day lives. They spoke about new ideas, using what Kubanyiova (2019) called *acts of imagination*.

4.5 Study Limitations and Ethical Considerations

One possible limitation of this study is the relationship between me as the researcher and my participants, as one of them is my immediate supervisor and the other eight are my colleagues. I worked in the same office as them and maintained a good relationship with each of them. However, that relationship could have caused the participants to feel insecure or cautious about the openness of their answers. This relationship poses a potential limitation but also benefited the study, as there was a healthy level of trust between the researcher and participants, potentially leading to the participants being willing to share openly about their lives.

Arndt and Rose (2022) compared two research studies that utilised diaries as data collection methods. One of Arndt and Rose's observations from that research was that the role of the researcher as an insider or outsider affects the study. The first diary collection study that they examined was Galloway and Rose (2014), and it was there that they discovered that because their participants were students of one of the researcher's, it was easier for them to obtain the data. However, this could affect the validity of the study because people who know the researchers may write what they assume they should write. Despite this, I attempted to avoid as much bias as possible by writing professional emails, and assuring my participants of their data's privacy. I also employed member checking after analysing the journal data so that they could assess my analysis of their individual data.

Another issue that emerged during this process was the lack of motivation, time, or energy to fill out the journals. Rose et al. (2020) cite this inconsistency on the part of participants as a potential danger of journals as a research method. I found this to be true in the journals, particularly as time went on. Though I always sent the journal survey links between the 1st and 6th of each month, the participants responded at varying times. The response times generally lengthened as time went on. For example, everyone responded to the September email by October 18 and to the October journal email by November 18, but by the time December rolled around, some of the participants did not respond until the last two or three days of the month. Because the Qualtrics (2022) survey links expire after some time, I often had to resend the email with an updated link and a reminder to fill in the journals.

Part of the issue with timing is possibly due to the lack of motivation to set aside time to accomplish the task, and part of it could be due to researcher inconsistency. Though I faithfully sent the first email at the same time each month, regularly logged in to check the responses, and quickly sent follow-up emails, I did not always write in a requested deadline, forgetting to do so in the months of December and January.

There was one exception, however. One of the participants, Sara, usually responded to the survey within a few days, the one exception being the very last month, in which she responded about a week later than she normally does. It is difficult to say whether this was due to her motivation levels or general personality traits and organisational qualities.

Regarding the transcriptions, because I was analysing them for content and not for language, there were times when I took out filler words and stammering to aid in reader comprehension. Another technical issue that appeared was the occasional need to conduct interviews online due to the pandemic, though I preserved their privacy and deleted any necessary data, so that should not have altered the results.

As I observed in the Results chapter, another possible limitation regarding my findings is that motivation is difficult to define and understand differently from person to person. However, I controlled for this by using the semi-structured interviews to ask follow-up questions when my participants' description of their motivation was unclear.

Finally, as I wrote in the Methodology chapter, there were some challenges with scheduling the interviews the second and third time, including a participant who had to leave early to go on leave. The differences in time could skew some of the data regarding the changes in motivation over the year.

Conclusion

All of my participants work in a very specific, supportive setting with a lower teaching load. The school keeps the teachers busy but also encourages them to be more a part of the community rather than just grading and lesson-planning. One of the pillars of that school is character development, with the other two being academic development and bilingualism. English is valued at that school and the students are motivated to learn it. Those factors all combine to create an environment that is supportive to growing teachers. There is an energy at the school that is youthful and willing to change and grow. However, there are still struggles that the teachers at that school face. They may be paid more than at state schools and have a comfortable working environment, but the expectations are high and the Covid pandemic has shown us that teachers do reach a level of stress where they may burn out.

What my participants shared with me was this: they need to have a voice and to know that they are heard. They need breaks from work and mental space away to recharge. Having a supportive community at home and at work is vital to retaining those teachers. Most of all, having and maintaining a vision for their working lives on both a small and large level is what keeps those teachers going when the pressure is on and they are tired and stressed.

In the process of observing and questioning these nine participants, I found the teachers who were most consistently motivated to push on and work hard were those with more experience and also a clearer vision for their future. They seemed content in their choice of profession but were constantly thinking of or planning changes to their routine or to their teaching process to improve as teachers. This appears to be connected to their possible selves, but not just in an ideal sense. They are aware of who they are and what they can do, which is more of what Sahakyan et al. (2018) call the feasible self.

The teachers who seemed to be the least motivated were not always so, which supports Rahmati et al.'s (2019) claim about fluctuating motivation. As a colleague of these teachers, I know that one of the teachers who struggled the most this year is also one who in previous years put a lot of effort into her work and seemed to take joy and energy from the process. It is possible that the Covid pandemic affected her and others in a detrimental way, but perhaps this period of questioning the future is what Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) refer to as

the necessary dissonance to make changes in vision and motivation. Though some of the teachers seemed discouraged in their work, it is possible, due to the changing nature of teaching, that they will feel very differently in the upcoming year. Future studies that observe teachers across multiple years could perhaps yield even more results as to how teachers' motivation changes long-term and not over just one year.

Another potential area of research is that of the influence of students on teachers. Because there is so much research that demonstrates the importance of teacher motivation on students, it would be fascinating to see how the *students* impact the *teachers*. Is it all on the teachers' shoulders to motivate a classroom? If they create an ideal environment, does that mean that motivation will automatically happen? How much influence do groups have on that process versus individual students? All teachers can attest to the influence of group dynamics in the classroom and how each group is so different. What may motivate one group or one year of students may not do so for a different one. What should teachers do with that? Is more training and support necessary? Higher wages to make the stress levels worth it? There are many issues to explore.

The findings of this study demonstrate the need for further research in similar contexts. My research here cannot be applied to all contexts because of the nature of case studies, but what I learned from my participants could lend some insight into language teaching motivation in other contexts as well. Overall, my hope is that this study will further the language teacher motivation discussion, adding more ideas to this so that educators and researchers alike can find ways to better motivate and support the teachers in their contexts.

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Appendix A: CUREC Approval Email



Language Teacher Motivation and Identity in Slovakia: A Case Study CIA-21-288

The above application has been considered on behalf of the Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC) in accordance with the procedures laid down by the University for ethical approval of all research involving human participants.

I am pleased to inform you that, on the basis of the information provided to DREC, the proposed research has been judged as meeting appropriate ethical standards, and accordingly, approval has been granted.

Please continue to follow all current guidance issued by CUREC during the pandemic, notably COVID-19: CUREC guidance on research involving human participants, https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics/coronavirus

If relevant please also check the CUREC website for their best practice research guides, these can be very useful in refining the writing up of ethical considerations in your research – see https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics/resources/bpg

Good luck with your research study,

Keep well and safe,

Yours sincerely,

All good wishes,

Liam

Chair, DREC

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet

Language Teacher Motivation and Identity in Slovakia: A Case Study

Information Sheet for [redacted] English language and literature teachers

Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) approval reference: CIA-21-288

Purpose of Study:

This study aims to research the motivation and language teacher identity of Slovak teachers of English at the [redacted] in Bratislava, Slovakia. It will be a longitudinal study taking place from September 2021 to June 2022, using short, monthly online journal responses and three quarterly one-on-one interviews.

Participant's Role:

As a participant, you will be asked to reply to three online journal questions about motivation and identity at the end of each month, along with three more in-depth interviews (connected to those journal questions) of approximately 45 minutes each. The interviews will occur near the beginning of the first semester, at the beginning of the second semester, and at the end of the school year. The questions you will be asked will be open-ended, and there are no right or wrong answers.

Researcher's Role:

As the researcher, I will record the audio of our interviews and compile them together with your journal responses. I am just a listener and observer in the process.

Confidentiality and Processes:

- A pseudonym will be used in place of your real name in all records (audio, transcript, and journal entries) so that all of your information is confidential.
- Everything you write will be uploaded and saved in a secure online portal called Qualtrics. All of your interviews will be transcribed and the audio subsequently deleted. The transcriptions will also be securely stored online and any backup hard copies will be safely locked in a secure file cabinet.
- You have the right to request to see, hear, and approve your written and spoken responses at any time and can withdraw your consent if there is information you do not want to be used.
- All of the data from this research will be analysed for a master's degree dissertation paper. The raw, original data will only be available to our research team – my supervisor and me.

Appendix C: Participant Consent Form

Consent to take part in *Language Teacher Motivation and Identity in Slovakia: A Case Study*

Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) approval reference: CIA-21-288

Purpose of Study:

This study aims to research the motivation and language teacher identity of Slovak teachers of English at [redacted] in Bratislava, Slovakia. It will be a longitudinal study taking place from September 2021 to June 2022, using short, monthly online journal responses and three quarterly one-on-one interviews.

	Please initial each box if you agree with the statement
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet version for the above research. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	☐
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any point without giving any reason.	☐
I understand who will have access to personal data provided, how the data will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the project.	☐

I understand that I will not be identifiable from any publications from this research. ☐

I consent to being audio recorded. ☐

I understand how audio recordings will be used in research outputs. ☐

Use of quotations: Please indicate your preference (select *one* option): ☐

a) I do not wish to be quoted. **or**

b) I agree to the use of quotations in research outputs if I am not identifiable. ☐

I give permission for you to contact me again to clarify information. ☐

I understand how to raise a concern or make a complaint. ☐

I agree to take part. I hereby assign to the researcher all copyright in my contribution for use in all work stemming from this project and future projects. ☐

Optional: I agree to my de-identified research data being used for future research. ☐

Optional: I agree that my personal contact details can be retained in a secure database so that the researchers can contact me about future studies. ☐

_____	dd / mm / yyyy	_____
Name of participant	Date	Signature

_____	dd / mm / yyyy	_____
Name of person taking consent	Date	Signature